

Music of  
William Walton  
Hewes

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‘*THE MUSICAL PILGRIM*’

THE MUSIC OF  
WILLIAM WALTON

VOLUME I

BY  
FRANK HOWES

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## PREFACE

THIS first 'Pilgrim' devoted to the analytical study of William Walton's compositions contains his first and at the time of writing (1941) his last published works—the early Pianoforte Quartet and the new Violin Concerto. But it omits from its survey two of his biggest achievements, the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* and the Symphony. These, together with the early Sinfonia Concertante and some of the shorter works, will be discussed in a second volume. I have to thank the composer for his help in the analysis of the Violin Concerto.

F. H.

1942.



## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

WILLIAM WALTON, born at Oldham in Lancashire on 29th March, 1902, has now reached middle life and has established himself as the leading English composer of his generation. His ambition has led him to write in the larger forms and his ability has enabled him to fill them with success. He belongs to no school and his training was largely self-conducted. His earliest teacher in music was his father and he went through one of the most fruitful training institutions open to an English boy—a cathedral choir. But his music from the earliest days shows strong individuality. Mr. Basil Allchin, who was assistant organist at Oxford Cathedral when Walton was a choirboy there, tells that he used to fill reams of manuscript paper with notes, mostly cast in the form of big motets for double choir, that somewhat baffled his choirmasters to whom he showed these juvenilia, but he was encouraged to continue along lines which, if obscure, were certainly not aimless. In due course the Dean of Christ Church who at the time was Dr. Thomas Banks Strong, Doctor of Music as well as Divinity, took a hand in shaping his career by passing him almost straight from choirboy to undergraduate. At sixteen he matriculated at Christ Church and during his Oxford days had some instruction from Sir Hugh Allen. Of systematic formal teaching he has had none and he can be said to be self-

taught after boyhood. Unlike other composers who had similarly picked up their training for themselves—Elgar and Boughton come to mind—Walton was not late in maturing sufficiently to make his mark as a young man. His Piano Quartet of 1918 was performed and subsequently published, and in 1923 he secured international recognition at the Salzburg meeting of the International Society of Contemporary Music. He produced a master work in the Viola Concerto when he was twenty-seven and had written a powerful symphony by the time he was thirty-three.

There is a sense however in which he was not fully mature when he appeared before the public as a fully fledged composer. His early years as a musician coincided with the post-Armistice conditions which were marked by a furious passion for dancing, the vogue of jazz, a cynical wit, and an anti-romantic outlook. Walton has always been *persona grata* with the juries who choose the works for the International Festivals of Contemporary Music, and to them romance was taboo because it was not contemporary. Music, like manners, had to be hard-boiled. But in the 'thirties this prohibition relaxed somewhat and the relaxation coincided with the development of Walton's own temperament, in which there is plainly a strain of brooding and almost melancholy feeling that is quite different from the sharp intelligence and smart exterior which are other conspicuous features of his style. A comparison of the Viola Concerto with *Façade* shows this difference.

From his Christ Church days Walton took away as technical equipment no more than an ingrained ability to write for voices, but the helpful influence of the Dean, and his friendship with Sacheverell Sitwell, which was

afterwards extended to the other members of that talented and artistic family, were of incalculable value to him. His musical career did not however develop along the academic lines that radiate from Oxford. The landmarks in it are the appearances of his works in the programmes of the International Festivals of Contemporary Music, and it was from these meetings abroad that his fame began to spread through England, though the authorities of the Leeds Festival must have the credit for recognizing his significance and including works from his pen in their solidly orthodox programmes. After a String Quartet at the first of the I.S.C.M. Festivals at Salzburg in 1923, Walton's name subsequently appeared at Zurich in 1926 with the *Portsmouth Point* overture, at Siena in 1928 with *Façade*, at Liège in 1930 with the Viola Concerto, and at Amsterdam in 1933 with *Belshazzar's Feast*. By this time his position at home had already been established, since *Belshazzar's Feast* had had its first performance at the Leeds Festival of 1928.

As an executant Walton is a capable conductor of his own works, but unlike his friend and contemporary, Constant Lambert, with whom he has much in common in his general taste and outlook upon music, he has never plunged into the hurly-burly of practical music-making. For a good many years he lived with the Sitwells and has subsequently spent much of his time quietly in the country. It is always something of a surprise—though there is no real reason why it should be—that a person of such quiet manner and of such retiring habits produces music so charged with electric power.

## *Pianoforte Quartet*

WALTON'S music first came before the public in 1923 when it was learned that the composer of the freakish extravaganza *Façade* had achieved an international reputation, to the extent at least of having a string quartet included in the first of the festivals of the International Society for Contemporary Music. *Façade* was produced in London in June ; in August the Quartet was played at Salzburg. Who was this William Walton ? Whose pupil was he ? The only clue to the category in which the new and unknown composer was to be placed was the company he kept : the other English representatives at the Salzburg Festival were Bliss and Lord Berners. The Quartet was not favourably noticed—it was too long to keep the attention of a tired audience at the end of a long programme—and a representative of *The Times* doubted ' the wisdom, from the composer's point of view, of forcing an immature work on the public notice '. Apparently the composer concurred in this view since the String Quartet has disappeared from public ken.

A still earlier work, however, the Pianoforte Quartet, composed some five years before, when the composer was only sixteen and therefore still more immature, refused to be suppressed, although the Post Office did its best by losing the sole manuscript score somewhere between London and Italy for two whole years. It eventually turned up unscathed and found its way into



print through the Carnegie Trust, which at that time was subsidizing the publication of modern British music. Stainer and Bell in 1924 issued the work written in 1918-19 while the composer was still at Oxford. When it was played some years later at an ordinary chamber concert in London, some astonishment and relief was expressed at the mildness of a work from the pen of one who was becoming known as a forcible, and perhaps formidable, writer. Very naturally the Quartet shows influences that have not been fully absorbed and it gives few signs of the way the composer was to develop. It is liable therefore to give a wrong impression to anyone who hears it without knowing its place in its creator's development, since it can hardly be called a characteristic work. Yet it does show some of his later characteristics, notably the fluidity of his themes, which are rarely heard in identical spellings at their various reappearances, powerful marcato rhythms, and a certain pungency in the harmony. And it is of extraordinary interest as the forerunner of the Concertos, the Cantatas, and the Symphony. After the String Quartet, Walton seems to have abandoned chamber music for the orchestra, and this juvenile work has therefore this added claim to our attention, that, however little representative it may be, it is the only available example of Walton's writing for concerted chamber ensemble.

The Quartet is dedicated to the Right Rev. Thomas Banks Strong, late Bishop of Ripon and later still of Oxford. Before he became Bishop of Ripon, Dr. Strong was Dean of Christ Church and to him, as has already been related, Walton was indebted at the time when the Quartet was written for the privilege of going through the University at an exceptionally early age.

Putting aside all this critical apparatus the Quartet captivates the hearer by its frankly youthful charm and its unabashed romanticism. There are two main streams in Walton's work, sometimes mingling, sometimes parting when one overlays the other. They are this romanticism, which put up its head in the Viola Concerto and emerged as master of the situation in the recent work (1939) the Violin Concerto, and the sheer devilish cleverness which is always uppermost in the witty, the quick, the incisive music, and emerges in prickly rhythms, pungent dissonance, and a general atmosphere of electric sparks. The 'twenties were not favourable to romanticism and after this Quartet that side of Walton's musical nature takes a back seat for a time. In the Piano Quartet, however, he writes like a romantic, though not like a nineteenth century composer, and more like a French than a German romantic. Or is that impression merely due to the medium being the same as that employed by Fauré?

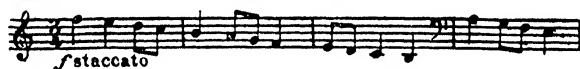
The first movement is laid out in regular sonata form, of which the proportions are : exposition 120 bars, consisting of a first and a second subject each of 60 bars—such equality is unusual—a development of 56 bars, and a recapitulation somewhat reduced to eighty odd bars, rounded off by a coda of 15. The development draws on both the first and second subjects, but does not elaborate them to any great extent, since each has been already expanded immediately upon its first statement in the exposition. The first subject is stated by the violin without any preliminaries—a sixteen bar tune in the Dorian mode over a double pedal point, tonic and dominant, held by the violoncello.

## Ex. 1



It has an unequal counterpoise, a downward scale in double octaves from the piano

## Ex. 2



This retort, however, is not an indication that the treatment of the instruments is to be antiphonal. On the contrary, the general method is concerted, but the opening deployment is very adroitly managed with a separate entry for each instrument. Violin and violoncello begin, the viola adds its voice to the last three bars of the opening tune (Ex. 1) to give additional weight to the crescendo, and then the piano breaks in with Ex. 2. Thereupon Ex. 1 is restated with full harmony in chords and arpeggios. This process of expansion is carried further as the strings alternate between arco, pizzicato, and tremolando, and the piano between emphatic scales and flowing passage work. The theme breaks up in the process and imitative use of *b* from Ex. 1 is the last stage in the link which leads into the second subject. Of this the out-

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standing feature is a quaver figure—*c* in Ex. 3, and as a preliminary to the statement of the second theme we have this figure played by the first violin over a hint in augmentation of the tune that is just coming played by the second violin. The tonal centre is now G sharp and the signature is actually changed for a few bars to five sharps. The new tune is announced by the piano in octaves.



The conclusive G sharp is not sounded and the strings pick up the tune from the beginning. The treatment of this second subject runs on very much the same lines as that of the first. Much is heard of figure *c* and a new figure turns up from the first subject, *a* in Ex. 1.

The development brings the two subjects into closer relationship, though it also asserts the ascendancy of the first. It begins with Ex. 1 still Dorian but now in B, but the opening section of tune is rounded off with the quaver figure *c*. The tonality changes by blunt sequences of chords consisting of superimposed triads garnished in many cases with 'added' notes. The second violin is generally busy with figure *c* mostly played tremolando, the violoncello shows an interest in Ex. 2. There is a moment when the rhythm breaks from threes into fives, an earnest of the restless dislocations of regular accents

which were to electrify the score of *Façade* and still more of the *Portsmouth Point* Overture. The four instruments subsequently break out into an argument of triplets against motifs *a* or *c*, which is only concluded by the emergence of motif *b* as the verdict. Thereupon the recapitulation follows.

The violin duly leads off tranquillo with Ex. 1, but the theme is now accompanied by the viola in imitation, by the violoncello with a tremolando phrase built up out of *c*, and by the piano playing sequences of chords. It is no literal recapitulation and after ten bars the theme shows traces of the influence of the second subject. The little complementary phrase, Ex. 2, is used as a link to the second subject which is now stated in three sharps. In contrast to what precedes it, where a strict diatonic Dorian in D veers to an Acolian on A, the feeling of the new tonality is that of a clear A major, and the tune Ex. 3 is given out by strings in unison with a piano accompaniment harmonized in chords, all played loud. The compression is less severe than in the case of the first subject, but again the recapitulation is not exact and the order of occurrence of the various constituents is changed. In the coda the work runs down thematically, dynamically, and in texture. A drooping phrase based on *b* is passed from one instrument to the other, and life is only kept in the movement by some triplets which the piano takes over from the violoncello. It ends quietly on a plagal cadence in Dorian D.

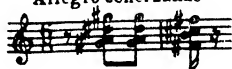
The significance of a movement which is essentially simple and is always perfectly straightforward to the ear is the fluidity of the thematic material, the same kind of identity in difference which is the most marked feature of the Symphony written seventeen years later.

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The Scherzo is propelled from the start by a scratchy figure from the strings.

### Ex. 4

*Allegro scherzando*



The strings do most of the propulsion through the movement, the piano has the tunes. Of these there are two. The first is

### Ex. 5



which, though you might not think it, is in C major, for the basic harmony, though much exacerbated with augmented triads, which are sometimes superimposed on one another, swings comfortably over a C-G-C bass. The second, which might have been written by Elgar and harmonized by John Ireland, has a grand swagger

### Ex 6

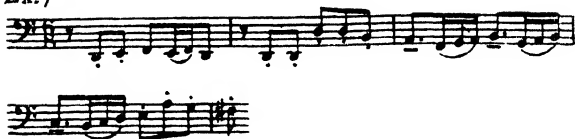


extended to twenty bars.

By way of compensation to the strings for dancing

attendance on these two melodies they are given a fugato entirely to themselves on this subject.

Ex. 7



which, it will be observed, is again in the Dorian mode.

The structure of the movement is simple. After an introductory scamper based on Ex. 4 and full of the bizarre flashes that are typical of later Walton, Tune 1 (Ex. 5) emerges on the piano. This first subject is rounded off by a return of the scampering repeated notes, pizzicato notes, trilled notes and various pianistic flourishes that are released by Ex. 4. The second subject is the fugato Ex. 7. When this is finished the piano takes the lead with Ex. 6 plumb in C major. A middle section follows in which various familiar elements are bandied about rather than developed. In particular the snap of Ex. 4 and the six-eight rhythm of Ex. 5 pursue each other. A recapitulation sets in with Ex. 5 transferred to the violin. The fugato duly follows in the same tonality as before and Tune 2 gathers the movement to its climax in the more sonorous key of E flat. It is extended in length and might have gone on for miles if the strings, not in the best of tempers even at the beginning of the movement, had not interrupted and banged down a conclusion on it with which the piano is obliged to concur.

It will have been observed, no doubt, that Ex. 7, the

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fugue subject, is a revised version of the opening bars of Ex. 1. Other allusions to the first movement also occur, notably reminiscences of *a* and *b*. In this movement there is more of the pungency, both harmonic and rhythmic, that later came to be regarded as Walton's especial sign and signature.

The third is a slow movement, somewhat Brahmsian in character alike in its first melody, the general run of its harmony, and in the interpolation of an agitato episode.

The opening subject is shared between strings and piano.



This is richly harmonized and then counterstated with more movement and more figuration. A change in the violoncello part has been authorized since the score was published. When the tune Ex. 8 appears in the tenor it is played—as will be observed in the record of the work made by the Reginald Paul Quartet—by the violoncello and not relegated to the pianist's left thumb. Since it is a tune made for the violoncello the alteration is pure gain, especially as there is quite enough triplet movement going on in the other parts.



This tune, Ex. 8, begins and ends the movement. The middle section, however, is not a correspondingly simple strain, though it does contain another melody.

Ex. 9 *Con moto*



This is plainly a tune for the viola. It is accompanied by chords on the piano and a series of harmonics, for which the composer appears in this movement to have conceived a sudden affection, on the violin. It is repeated in pure three-part string writing. Then the mood is disturbed with agitation at the approach of a long and rather dramatic allusion to the first tune of the first movement, Ex. 1. These three disparate elements are made forcibly to cohere by being placed firmly between the early and late statement of the main tune, Ex. 8.

In the Finale the cub Walton shows the claws, rhythmic claws mostly but also some sharp-pointed dissonance, that the young lion was later to put out in the ferocity of *Belshazzar's Feast*. There is also a touch of extravagance in the writing for the instruments, which in point of fact is not fully effective, but does at any rate contribute an effervescing ingredient to the tartness of the mixture. The movement is constructed on the principles of the sonata rondo, the ritornello being a series of rhythmic kicks (*d*) which soon develop into an energetic tune, (*e*) of Ex. 10,

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Ex. 10



the essence of which is still more concentrated later in

Ex 11



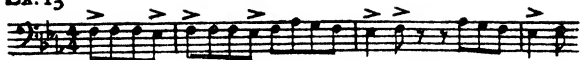
It is characteristic of Walton's tunes that they develop as they proceed, like the Bergsonian conception of evolution in which the present as it unrolls itself from the past carried the past with it. So Walton's tunes are not, like folk tunes or Schubert's tunes or even Beethoven's developable themes, in the nature of statements. Rather are they self-developing ideas, which grow as they go. After a crisp statement of this ritornello a quite obvious transition leads to the first episode, a sustained tune for the violoncello in marked contrast to what has just preceded it

Ex 12



When this has been amplified the ritornello returns, in which a version of Ex. 11 evolves all sorts of things out of itself, so that it almost doubles its original length. The second episode is a fugato on a subject beginning with

**Ex. 13**



and running to nine bars in length, which is a variant of Ex. 10. *e*. This turns back into a new and more cursive version of the ritornello, in which the rhythm is syncopated and contorted. The first episode returns in a different key as a second subject, and brings with it also a non-fugal statement of matters arising out of Ex. 13, culminating in rushing quavers in three different octaves. Just before the final brief return of the ritornello, Ex. 10. *d*, there is a subsidence of the turmoil in which the piano reverts once more to the opening bars of Ex. 1 which thus haunt the work throughout its course. Apart from the direct quotations of *a* and *b* from Ex. 1, which we have noted as we have gone along, the little quaver figure in *a* has proved to be the germ of the whole quartet—a germ which persists through many mutations. This thematic identity in difference is a basic element in Walton's style. It is so natural to him that he seems hardly conscious of it. In this quartet we see both the conscious recapitulation of the main idea of Ex. 1 and a more pervasive unconscious persistence of the quaver germ. Which is interesting both as musical thought and as showing how an intensely musical mind works.

## *Façade*

FAÇADE, as originally planned and executed in 1923, was the name given to an entertainment devised by the

Sitwells. On a curtain a monstrous head was painted (the original by Gino Severini and a later one by Frank Dobson) with an enormous mouth fitted with a megaphone through which some poems of Edith Sitwell were declaimed by a reciter to the accompaniment of Walton's music. In this form the scoring is for flute or piccolo, clarinet or bass clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, violoncello and percussion. In 1926 the composer revised and extended his work, in which form it was given at the Siena meeting of the International Festival of Contemporary Music in September, 1928. Already during the Russian Ballet Season of 1927 at the Lyceum an independent version as an orchestral Suite had been heard, which was that put into the programme of the Leeds Festival of 1928. Subsequently a second Suite was made. These two Suites have since been utilized for a ballet by Mr. Frederick Ashton, who has taken ten numbers for a set of Divertissements. *Façade* therefore may be heard in three forms: (1) for reciter and chamber ensemble (recorded for Decca by the poetess and Constant Lambert); (2) as the accompaniment to a Ballet in the Sadler's Wells and Ballet Rambert repertories, and (3) as two Suites for full orchestra, either separately or together, in which case some rearrangement of the numbers is officially recommended.

This is not the place for literary criticism, but for a true appreciation of *Façade* in its original form it is well to bear in mind that Miss Sitwell's poems are not written, as most poetry and all prose is written, to develop an idea or pursue a line of thought; on the contrary they play on words which are connected by free association, sometimes of assonance, sometimes of sense. Their train of thought must not be too relentlessly sought; they must

rather be appreciated as nonsense verse is appreciated ' for the vagueness, the sheer harmony of word ' which is 'emphatically poetry—poetry run mad, poetry on the verge of becoming music ', as the Belgian poet, Emil Cammaerts, once defined nonsense verse. The difficulty of any nonsense verse which is not sheer airy-fairy fantasy is like that of making music on bells, which are all overtones with little or no foundation tone : Miss Sitwell's poems are made of the overtones of words. The flow of images is determined by exigencies of rhyme rather than of idea : the sound makes the sense. The addition of music is a substitute for ideas as the connecting thread and its function is to unify the roaming discursiveness of the poem. The possibilities of thus successfully combining two arts on a new basis is best observed in No. 2 of the first suite, *Valse*, where the rhythm of the dance-music makes sense of the poem by unifying the scattered images of Miss Sitwell's word-picture.

The poem begins :

Daisy and Lily,  
Lazy and silly  
Walk by the shore of the wan grassy sea,  
Talking once more 'neath a swan-bosomed tree.  
Rose castles,  
Tourelles,  
Those bustles—  
Where swells  
Each foam-bell of ermine  
They roam and determine  
What fashions have been and what fashions shall be.

The poems are spoken in level tones and strict time—

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they are set in the score to pitchless notes of definite time-values—so as to depersonalize the voice as far as possible, the megaphone and the concealment of the reciter being further devices to achieve the same purpose.

It may be convenient to tabulate the contents of the various entertainments to which this versatile music has contributed.

### I. *Sitwellismus*

The poems are now grouped in the following order :—

Group A.    *Hornpipe*  
              *En Famille*  
              *Mariner Man*

Group B.    *Trio for two cats and a trombone*  
              *Through gilded trellises*  
              *I do like to be beside the seaside* ('Tango)

Group C.    *Scotch Rhapsody*  
              *Lullaby for Jumbo*  
              *Old Sir Faulk* (Fox-trot)

Group D.    *By the Lake*  
              *A Man from a Far Countree*  
              *Country Dance*

Group E.    *Yodelling Song*  
              *Black Mrs. Behemoth*  
              *Popular Song*

Group F. *Polka*  
*Valse*  
*Tarantella*

Group G. *Four in the morning*  
*Something lies beyond the scene*  
*Sir Beelzebub*

This selection of twenty-one out of some thirty poems subjected at various times to musical treatment was made for the revival of 1942 and is definitive. 'The Fanfare, which does not appear in the above list, was in fact used in the earlier recital performances.' 'Daphne', 'Through gilded trellises' and 'Old Sir Faulk' have an independent existence as three songs, essays respectively in the English, the Spanish and the American styles.

## II. *The Orchestral Suites*

No. 1. (a) *Polka*  
 (b) *Valse*  
 (c) *Swiss Yodelling Song*  
 (d) *Tango—Pasodoblé*  
 (e) *Tarantella Sevillana*

No. 2. (a) *Fanfare*  
 (b) *Scotch Rhapsody*  
 (c) *Country Dance*  
 (d) *Noche Espagnole*  
 (e) *Popular Song*  
 (f) *Old Sir Faulk* (Foxtrot)

The two Suites may be mixed and played as a whole,

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lasting twenty-five minutes. In this case the following order is recommended :—

- |                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| (a) <i>Fanfare</i>              | (II.1.) |
| (b) <i>Scotch Rhapsody</i>      | (II.2.) |
| (c) <i>Valse</i>                | (I.2.)  |
| (d) <i>Tango-Pasodoblé</i>      | (I.4.)  |
| (e) <i>Swiss Yodelling Song</i> | (I.3.)  |
| (f) <i>Country Dance</i>        | (II.3.) |
| (g) <i>Polka</i>                | (I.1.)  |
| (h) <i>Noche Espagnole</i>      | (II.4.) |
| (j) <i>Popular Song</i>         | (II.5.) |
| (k) <i>Old Sir Faulk</i>        | (II.6.) |
| (l) <i>Tarantella Sevillana</i> | (I.5.)  |

III. *The Ballet.* (First produced by the Camargo Society at the Cambridge Theatre, 26th April, 1931.)

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| (a) <i>Scotch Rhapsody</i>      | à trois                                   |
| (b) <i>Nocturne</i>             | male solo                                 |
| (c) <i>Yodelling Song</i>       | a milking scene à quatre                  |
| (d) <i>Polka</i>                | solo en pointes                           |
| (e) <i>Fox-Trot</i>             | à quatre                                  |
| (f) <i>Valse</i>                | à quatre danseuses                        |
| (g) <i>Popular Song</i>         | à deux hommes                             |
| (h) <i>Country Dance</i>        | character dance for two men<br>and a girl |
| (j) <i>Tango Pasodoblé</i>      | à deux                                    |
| (k) <i>Tarantella Sevillana</i> | ensemble                                  |

(b), (e) and (h) were later additions to the original seven numbers.



The musical differences are chiefly of scoring and texture. Thus the saxophone of the chamber ensemble is interchangeable with the cor anglais in the orchestral suites ; in some instances the one is marked in the score as preferable, in other cases the other instrument is to be preferred. The Tarantella is noticeably shorter in the *Sitwellismus* than in the orchestral or ballet version. It will be best to devote my commentary on the music to its fullest, that is, its orchestral, version.

*First Suite.*

*a. Polka.* A cheerful rhythm over an oompah bass—an onomatopœa promoted to the statue of a technical term by Dr. Vaughan Williams—pounds out a respectable tonic-dominant-subdominant foundation for the harmony. Snooks are cocked by all the wood-wind together indulging in rapid scale passages, fragments of tune pop up from the various solo instruments, a satirical harmonic progression makes a grimace :



At last what it has been hinting at is shouted without disguise by the trumpet—the old music-hall song, ‘ See me dance the polka, See me clear the ground ’

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**Ex. 2**



In the version with recitation the opening words are La-la-la-lo, La-la-lo-la, La (which reinforce the rhythm of the side drum) and the clue is declared at once

See me dance the Polka  
Said Mr. Wag like a bear.

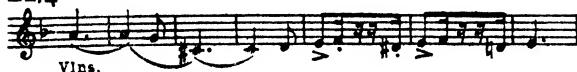
The absence of words in the orchestral suite emphasizes the wit of the music.

*b.* Valse. This valse is a parody of at least three kinds of vales—Tchaikovsky's, Strauss's, and Jazz. It begins with a bogus piece of *Casse-Noisette*



But the general method of jazz accompaniment—broken figures, displaced accents, cross rhythm, back-chat instrumentation—is applied at once and intensified when the key changes to F. The tune of this part, when it emerges, is Viennese.

**Ex. 4**



And the marcatissimo ebullition of leaping octaves and trills to which it leads is quite in the Johann Strauss manner. This longer second section is enclosed by a recapitulation of the short C major opening.

c. Swiss Jodelling Song. Three things go to this skit on what one feels is the German component of the Swiss scene—an exceedingly sentimental tune, a heavy Landler rhythm, and scoring, which, for all its hints of cowbells on glockenspiel and xylophone, finally achieves the portable harmonium and zither of a German beer garden. The bassoon first announces the tune without accompaniment.



Various decorations are attached to it—trills from the flutes, a quotation from the *Ranz des Vaches* from the oboes, horn calls from the brass, melancholy signs from the wood-wind in turn. After this orgy of sentiment the song is concluded by a pert cadence in two keys.



d. Tango—Pasodoblé. There are two music-hall tunes at the back of this Tango, one explicitly stated and

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the other suggested. 'I do like to be beside the seaside', which is caught up by the composer from the word 'seaside' in the text exactly as Miss Sitwell catches up herself, is played on the cor anglais. It is accompanied by a South America syncopation—lazier than the North American variety employed in the Valse—on the bassoon



This is how the dance begins. It is interrupted by a gobble-gobble noise which in the original was spoken, but in the full orchestral version is made of trills on strings and ascending broken thirds on the wind rising to a scream. The key changes from E flat to G and a new, livelier oompah rhythm is started up, against which a tune from off the street is spat out in chunks. 'Tempo primo' and the old key return but before the 'Seaside' tune comes back we hear another :

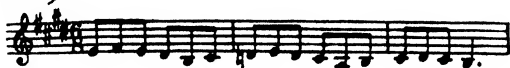
### **Ex. 8**



Is this just a tango tune or is it an allusion to 'Get out and get under the automobile'? Or is that too far-fetched?

e. Tarantella Sevillana. The two chief rhythms of six-eight time are started up at once

Ex. 9a



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in all these dance movements the score bustles with ingenious figures here, there, everywhere and all the time—but it would be confusing to set it out in detail. Certainly in the Tarantella it passes much too swiftly to allow the ear to linger over the piquancies presented to it and as quickly pushed aside by others equally pointed. The work owes its brilliance to this finely jewelled detail of rhythm and orchestration.

The Trio contains, as a trio should, two ideas, and then, after a moment when the stride broadens to 9-8 time, the first Minuet is resumed and developed at greater length than on its first statement and so becomes sufficiently emphatic to provide a conclusive ending to the suite in any of the permutations in which it may be played.

### *Second Suite*

a. Fanfare. A short fanfare in C with a bias towards the Aeolian mode begins as though, after a single trumpet call, it was to be a summons to attention by a drum and fife band. But it soon adds horns and trumpets in canon—the antithetical use of the two brass instruments is a persistent feature of Walton's scoring. Alto saxophone and/or cor anglais participate but the double basses are silent. In any version of *Façade* the Fanfare leads straight into

b. Scotch Rhapsody. The suggestion is of a Highland reel. The wood-wind give out *molto vivace* a dotted-note tune. After a couple of bars the strings pizzicato and the side drum snap out strong accents at irregular intervals. The central tune which is passed round from

one instrument to another as in a partnership of jugglers is this :—

Ex II



The movement is short. Percussion is copiously used and considerable subtleties are demanded : thus the side-drum player is instructed to play on the wood and the cymbal player with a wire brush.

c. Country Dance. Here is more suggestion. We expect pipe and tabor. The tabor begins, but it is not a drum ; instead a violoncello pizzicato is made to sound like the rustic drum. The other strings soon give it more volume as flute and clarinet begin their piping. The element of parody is not conspicuous in this number and there is no suggestion either of a traditional English Country Dance or of a tune from Playford's *The Dancing Master*. The number was composed as an afterthought for the Ballet in which it is used as the innocent accompaniment for a dramatic sketch involving a Maiden, a Yokel and the

Squire. The main tune which is stated in canon by flute and clarinet is a very good example of the way in which Walton achieves unity without symmetrical repetitions of pattern : the elements recur but with their various features in different places.

Ex. 12



The scoring is exceptionally simple; the strings do nothing but accompany, most of the time pizzicato, the tune which flits from one of the four ordinary wood-wind instruments—no sophisticated saxophones here—to the other. The texture, though contrapuntal, is kept very clear; air-holes and breathing spaces break up the melody so that it has to be passed like a football along the forward line, and often enough only mere fragments of it are in the air at any one moment.



*d. Noche Espagnole.* English simplicity is followed by Spanish exoticity : by the tango in the ballet and by *Noche Espagnole* in the suite. In either case the contrast of treatment is complete. Cor anglais, saxophone and brass return and the percussion player picks up his most picturesque instruments—castanets, tambourine and triangle. In the original version the title of the poem to be recited is ‘Trio for Two Cats and a Trombone’, but none of these instruments actually appears in the score. Various suggestions, however, are contained in the poem, which begins :

Long steel grass—  
The white soldiers pass  
The light is braying like an ass.

Mouth organ, trumpet, drum, ‘the martial cornet’, castanets and the ‘sound of the onycha’ (which however is really a smell) are poured out by the poetess in a riot of imagery and picked up by the composer.

The military evocations are disposed of first by a trumpet call, accompanied by the castanets that stand for ‘the tall Spanish jade’, who is the heroine of the poem. Soon, however, a swaying figure on the clarinet leads to a free rhapsody on the saxophone over a tango rhythm on the strings. The texture is enriched to a tutti, there is some intricate rhythmic elaboration of the steady pulse of the dance, and the music becomes as voluptuous as its title suggests.

*e. Popular Song.* From languor we return to healthy vulgarity. It’s wonderful what a diminished third can do to an honest tune, and a hiccup to a regular four-bar

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phrase. The tune is a tune as far as the cadence at the fourth bar, thereafter it becomes an outline sketch of a tune with side-drum and cymbal to fill in the gaps. A jazz treatment is thus imposed on a tune that might have come from a music-hall or perhaps from Sousa.

Ex.13 *Grazioso*



Observe the diminished intervals on the strong beats ; observe the economy which uses the same melodic figure many times over to make up a tune, a feature which is at once the strength and weakness of popular tunes in that it helps to impress them quickly on the casual ear and equally quickly tires it by too much repetition. There is no fear that a composer of Walton's resource will allow it to go beyond tickling the ear. He provides it now with a descant above on the flute, now with a counterpoint below on the saxophone, and as in *Noche Espagnole* keeps the tune in a perpetual state of transference from one solo instrument to another.

*f.* Old Sir Faulk. This is a fox-trot, but it also exists as a song, one of a trilogy composed by the composer to poems in the original *Faade* but not, with the exception of *Sir Faulk*, included in the Orchestral Suites. The direction to the singer of the song is ' nello stile americano ' and to the accompanist ' sempre molto ritmico '. It is in fact an elaborately scored piece of jazz. Jazz has its own kind of instrumentation, in which bowed strings have no place and banjos are substituted for fiddles, and the wind is differently distributed, and used individually

## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* 37

rather than in chorus. *Old Sir Faulk* is scored for orchestra and not for jazz band. It suggests, but does not imitate, the dance orchestra, but it goes so far as to borrow the percussion and the saxophone of the typical dance band. The drummer should provide himself with 'traps'; bass drum, side drum, cymbal, and Chinese blocks are used. The trombone is asked for a quasi-glissando and has the following solo



The saxophone is told to 'slap' his tongue and the horns to flutter theirs; the trumpets put on Wa-wa mutes alternately with ordinary mutes. So is the orchestra enriched with jazz effects, so is the jazz band made more resplendent with orchestral tone colours. 'This is parody inverted.

The general atmosphere of the music is one of incisive, yet not cruel, parody; it had mockery without malice; wit is used as a criticism of style; virtuosity in the use of rhythms and tones epitomizes the taste of a decade in fifty bars of modern music.

## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*

It is generally agreed that in the Viola Concerto Walton has given the most characteristic expression of his mind. Each of its three movements is strongly defined, and

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they contain between them most of the idioms, stylistic tricks of speech, the peculiar dynamism and the sharp orchestration that are the superficially recognizable features of his work. But their basic unity is unusually marked. It is not in any case a discursive work ; the usual extended Allegro movement, which opens a concerto and bears the main burden of its argument, is missing. The longest movement comes last and gathers into its more ample embrace the conclusions of the first two movements. Literal quotations, such as may provide a mechanical unity, are not in Walton's normal way of going to work—the conclusion of the *Sinfonia Concertante* is exceptional in this respect. You will hardly find him recapitulating a theme strictly and his tunes might be called Protean or Bergsonian with equal justice : they turn up in many different forms and they recreate themselves as they proceed. But the organic unity of the whole is forcibly brought home to the listener—he may even be able here and there to put his finger on a piece of connective tissue, such as the double-stopped sixths in the finale which recall the first movement—because it has been fused in the crucible of the composer's mind.

The work was composed during 1928–9 and received its first performance at a Promenade Concert on 3rd October, 1929, with the composer conducting and Paul Hindemith, the German composer and violist, playing the solo part. It was chosen by the jury for performance at the International Festival of Contemporary Music at Liège in 1930, when Lionel Tertis was the soloist and the composer again conducted it. In the gramophone records made by Decca the performers are Frederick Riddle, the London Symphony Orchestra and the com-

## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* 39

poser. The scoring is not unduly elaborate ; the ordinary full orchestra with three each of the wood-wind is employed, but very careful directions are given to secure the finer shades of orchestral colour and intensity.

The first movement is marked 'andante comodo' and is really the slow movement. Its plan is a regular but slightly condensed sonata form. Like many concertos since Mendelssohn, who dispensed with the classical opening tutti, it begins with an exposition stated by the solo instrument—the soloist in fact dominates the situation and the orchestra is content for the most part to add imitative counterpoints. The texture indeed is strikingly contrapuntal : the wood-wind for instance is mostly employed to draw solo lines across the web, and passages of homophony for the full orchestra never last for more than a few bars at a time. After the first theme has been stated in a kind of A minor and a point has been made of a motif marked with a false relation—I quote its first appearance on the flutes at bar 13

EX. I



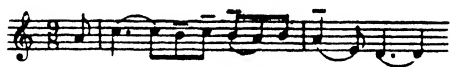
a second theme is given out in a new rhythm (simple triple instead of compound triple, which sometimes stretches itself to seven beats in the bar). Of this the predominant tonality, as determined by the melodic centre and the main emphasis of the bass, is F sharp. Then comes the development which is more incisive in contrast to the predominantly lyrical character of the

## 40 *The Music of William Walton*

exposition. At one point the solo is itself so worked upon as to demand the expression-mark 'martellato'. When the soloist returns after a brief orchestral tutti he resumes his suaver manner and plays the second subject now harmonized in double-stopped sixths (both with and without false relation). A second and longer tutti leads into a compressed recapitulation in which the two main themes are stated but once and the soloist makes his final observation in the falsely related sixths of Ex. 1.

Such is the ground plan. Now for the details. A dark background is immediately provided for a dark-hued solo by imitative phrases played by orchestral violas and first violins on their low strings and then by clarinet in its hollow-toned chalumeau register. In the third bar the soloist enters with

Ex 2



a theme whose passionate character is quickly proclaimed in its continuation

Ex 3



This solo is drawn out in long arabesques against a background purposely obscured by tremolando and muted violins, through which are obtruded broken pieces of this undulating sort of melody and the falsely related sixths of Ex. 1 sharply etched by the wood-wind in turn. A short bridge passage, consisting of double-stopped parallel sixths on the solo viola, virtually unaccompanied

## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* 41

save by a rumble in the bass, leads to the second subject parallel sixths on the solo viola, virtually unaccompanied in a new rhythm, announced by the soloist over a spare accompaniment —

**Ex. 4**



which becomes more emphatic as

**Ex. 5**



A tapping with the point of the bow on the violins imparts a touch of asperity and animation to a stringendo passage which makes the movement become for the time being more restless, as it heads for the development in which the first subject (Ex. 2) appears in a more angular form. The solo viola submits it to still another change which breaks away into a run of semiquavers, while above it the wind play phrases from the second subject (Ex. 5). A very brief tutti leads to a reduction in speed and the soloist proceeds to treat the second subject in double-stopped sixths (without false relation). These consecutive sixths, either with or without false relation, are a basic idea of the movement.

**Ex. 6**



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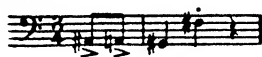
This reassertion of F sharp minor makes it the main key of the development section. The remainder of the development in which the solo plays no part packs many events into a simultaneous tutti. The flute, oboe and cor anglais do this—

Ex. 7



The clarinets, three of them, take up the tapping quavers which they soon hand over to the four horns. The strings make scrubbing-brush noises *sul ponticello*, while the bass makes great heaves in this rhythm—

Ex. 8



sevenths, octaves, and ninths being indiscriminately thrust up in the effort. When the energy is exhausted the soloist introduces the recapitulation, in which each of the constituent ideas, viz : the first subject (Exs. 2 and 3), the second subject (Ex. 4), and the consecutive sixths (Ex. 6) are simply restated. As the movement ends the false relation in the sixths is once more made prominent.

The second movement is generally described as a rondo with the feeling of a scherzo. Its main theme certainly starts off crisply and briskly as though it might make a rondo tune, and it crops up time and again, sometimes where a rondo theme might be expected to recur. But the music will not fit into the scheme of a simple rondo : the two episodes stand next to one another



## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* 43

without the intervention of the rondo tune, if one tries to analyse the movement that way. Then, too, there is a large development section in which the orchestra asserts itself and temporarily refuses to let the soloist have things all his own way. But neither is it a sonata-rondo as Beethoven understood the form, in which the first episode is equated with a second subject and ultimately recapitulated. The movement has an irrepressibility which will not lend itself to confinement within a formula. As always in Walton one tune becomes another by a process of creative evolution and the unity of the movement is organic rather than mechanical. Still, in this Scherzo we have a basic idea which recurs ritornello fashion (Ex. 10) and we have two contrasting ideas (Ex. 11 and Ex. 12) that some schematization is possible. I view its ground plan as a modified sonata—the chief modifications being in the dimensions of the development, which is much expanded, and of the recapitulation, which is considerably compressed and curtailed.

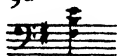
The first idea develops from a mere germ

Ex. 9



and grows like lightning to some forty bars in length. Its tonal centre is E minor with the supertonic more powerful than the dominant—the tonic chord in fact is

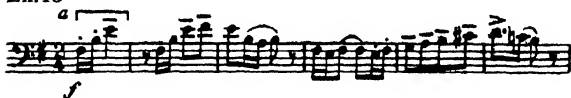
9<sup>a</sup>



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The rondo-like tune, which constitutes the first idea, is stated thus on its first appearance

Ex. 10



Underneath this a restless bass goes out on the warpath. It is inclined to group itself into three quavers as it paces up and down the scale, but every now and again it misses a note or two and when it picks itself up, it finds itself counting twice three are five. This five-beat grouping necessitates some changes of time signature— $1/4$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $3/8$ ,  $5/8$ . These irregularities are directed to be played 'con molto preciso'.

The transition to the second subject momentarily banishes this rhythmic unrest and while the orchestra goes pat-pat, pat-pat—though even here the accent gets misplaced before the passage is finished—the viola runs up the scale and plunges into a four level quaver bit of tune

Ex. 11



though it quickly relapses into semiquavers and leaves the orchestra to carry on with quavers. The displacement of the accents prepares the way for a new idea in American rhythm.

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Ex. 12



This bit of jazz—note how the soloist snaps at it with (a) as it thrusts its way upon the scene—is the first part of the second subject and asserts the tonality of A major-minor. It includes an explicit statement of the five-note group, another persistent feature of the movement, emphasized by presentation in contrary motion. The second constituent idea of the second subject asserts a flatter tonality, F major. Its beginning is marked by some three-note chords in syncopated rhythm on the solo viola (see Ex. 13 below for its shape and character), and its close by a solo statement of Ex. 12. Ex. 10 now returns in its original key. Is it a rondo coming round again, or is it the beginning of a development section, such as Beethoven would have written with an immediate reference to the first subject? The latter is the better analysis of the structure, though development is not a suitable description of the musical process involved, since the themes do not expand and flower as in Beethoven but contract, thereby however losing nothing in force. Ten bars of Ex. 10 are succeeded by the transition, which leads now to D major, and the second idea of the second subject—the chorded passage—

Ex. 13



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This is an orchestral tutti, corresponding to the second big tutti in a Mozart concerto. The soloist joins in with allusions to Ex. 10 and an extensive review of the various rhythms and motifs ensues at unabated speed, culminating in another orchestral statement of Ex. 13, this time in a key signature of six sharps. This is the climax which eventually gives way to a recapitulation beginning for all the world like a rondo with Ex. 10 in E minor. What follows is a condensed review of the chief material, with many modifications of the soloist's figuration. The second subject, however, having had two orchestral statements of its larger component (Ex. 13) in the middle section, is content with a single ghostly restatement of its shorter member, Ex. 12. But the soloist will not tolerate a ghostly ending and, seizing the main thematic ideas, Ex. 9, Ex. 11 and the four semi-quavers of Ex. 12, brusquely finishes the movement with a résumé in six bars—

Ex. 14



The third movement is the longest and discharges a function the precise opposite of most classical concerto finales : it gathers up the mercurial emotions of the first two movements and reveals their serious purpose. An epilogue (not so named) definitely recalls the opening of the concerto and sums up, not so much the finale, as the whole work in a passage of eloquent and serious discourse, whose mood is almost one of resignation. The process of gathering up what has gone before distends the form of

## *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* 47

the finale and expands its emotional range from a grotesque beginning to a sublime conclusion. Its dramatic scheme is the opposition of a persistent theme of strongly marked character against less obvious, more fugitive, but equally persistent, elements from the first movement. The main theme, very dry in its first statement on the bassoons, begins thus :

Ex.15



The dotted figures break into triplets before the soloist enters at the eighth bar and picks up the tune a fifth higher. This hint at fugal style is duly taken and there is a proper fugato before the end. Another hint is perhaps more like a pun and refers not to what is coming, but to what has gone ; the Scherzo opened with an upward motif spelt F sharp, B, E, the Finale opens with an upward motif spelt E, B, F sharp. Walton mostly avoids literal repetitions, but he is fond of allusions that conceal themselves in slightly wider or narrower intervals, slightly longer or shorter rhythms. So here, though we have his assurance that he was not consciously aware of the connexion.

The key is A major. The tune Ex. 15 is stated, and of course extended with more dotted-note figures and triplets, three times. The orchestra's two enunciations are seven bars long, the soloist's which comes between them, sandwich fashion, is thirteen bars long. The key changes to A minor and a squirming figure constitutes a transition to a second subject of a totally different char-

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acter. The transition, amounting to another thirteen bars shared between both parties, is constituted thus :

Ex.16



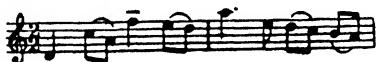
The second subject is in two pieces, both of them more lyrical than anything that has been heard for some time

Ex.17



and

Ex.18



which is like unto it, especially in the common shape of their second bars. But we have had double-stopped sixths before in the first movement. Also in the first movement we had a second subject identical in shape, but slightly different in melodic interval—compare Ex. 5. So this is the point at which first and third movements come to grips.

An extended development follows, the processes of which are almost conventional ; imitation, canon even, and augmentation are used. The augmentation allows the soloist some florid runs and trills, the equivalent of the old-fashioned 'second solo'.

When Ex. 15 appears in order to begin the Recapitulation, its key is A minor and its opening phrase employs different intervals and different degrees of the scale in Walton's most characteristic manner.



This brief statement by the orchestra leads quickly to the buzzing triplet transition, Ex. 16, which the soloist takes over single-handed. This too is reduced in length and Ex. 17 is soon once more upon the scene, this time in C and played by horns and wood-wind with the solo viola descanting above them.' When Ex. 18 follows, a little late owing to the fascinations of double stopped sixths, it turns off into something like a cadenza, supported only by chords. This ought to be the conclusion of the matter, but it by no means fulfils expectation, for it leads instead into a new and even longer second development, beginning in the remote key of F major. The first subject is again under discussion, the keys are impermanent, so that it would give the wrong impression to call the whole of this long passage to the end of the movement an epilogue. Emotionally, the epilogue does not occur till the key and the theme and the tempo settle down to what they were at the beginning of the movement, and much has still to happen before that point is reached. What does happen is first a reconsideration of Ex. 15 and then a decision to treat it in fugato with certain modifications of its rhythmic outline. This leads naturally to a big and heavily orchestrated climax in which the soloist has nothing to say. When it is over the

tone dies away, the soloist re-enters, the key is back once more at A major. Ex. 15 returns, but is completely subdued by the super-imposition of Ex. 2 from the beginning of the concerto. The falsely related sixths of the first movement also recur and assert their influence in the very last cadence of all, in which the solo viola sustains A and C sharp while the orchestral violas softly clash C natural against it in three pizzicato chords. There is just a touch of acerbity in the reverie over these tunes from the past, and the oboes intensify the poignancy by a soft but acute sequence of thirds.

Is it a melancholy end? Not really, for the main feeling is one of accomplishment and acceptance. The lingering farewell is, as it were, covered by the falling twilight and the boat glides out to sea in calm. But the viola is like Jessica: at the sound of sweet music it is never merry.

### *'In Honour of the City of London'*

THE success of *Belshazzar's Feast* at the Leeds Festival of 1931 was such that it was inevitable that Walton should be asked for another cantata. Yorkshire indeed has been faithful to the Lancastrian composer, for it included *Façade* in the programme of the 1928 Festival, followed with *Belshazzar's Feast* three years later, and put into the 1937 Festival not only the cantata *In Honour of the City of London* but also the Coronation March, which derives its title, *Crown Imperial*, from the poem of this very cantata.

The vocal writing is bold—its choral counterpoint has been called 'rough' and the parts do clash sharply



*'In Honour of the City of London'* 51

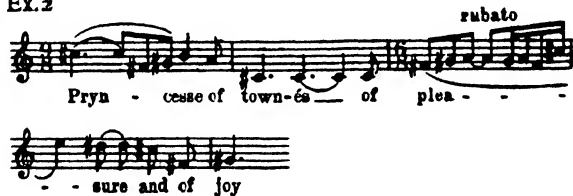
at times—the orchestration is exuberant, and the whole proceeds with tremendous vigour and buoyancy. The cantata, however, has not made the same wide-spread appeal to choral singers as did *Belshazzar's Feast*. It is difficult to sing, no doubt ; difficult not only to get some of the discordant harmony in tune, but, also vocally difficult, as when at the beginning the sopranos have to jump from high G to the F sharp a ninth below and again at the end when they have to snatch at their high B's—

Ex.1



On the other hand here is a vocal line very much in Walton's restless melodic vein yet entirely grateful to sing—

Ex.2



The harmonic asperity or ferocity—it is both by turns—is accounted for sometimes by Walton's palate for pungency—compare the taste for tonic sevenths in the later Violin Concerto. Sometimes it is the outcome of a piece of logic, thus—

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Ex.3

Here is a cadence in B flat. On the strong beat, however, we have in the orchestra a tonic ninth. This makes a pungent tonic chord, but it is also part of an ascending sequence of chords of the diatonic seventh which the orchestra is bent on establishing in a series of consecutives. Even so the chord of G in the bass of the orchestral part seems a deliberate darkening of the harmony, making the complete chord opaque instead of piercingly bright, but its logic is established at the fourth beat of the bar in the progression of the bass down from B through G to F, each note bearing on it the notes of an open triad.

This kind of thing makes the music very strong in flavour, very energetic in movement and keeps up an excitement that becomes a little tiring until it is eased by the tranquil section describing the River Thames, which affords a welcome relief. On the whole the impression from the first performance was that so much strenuousness, which was an inheritance from *Belshazzar's Feast*, here overreached itself and defeated its own end. These vivid strokes, this exuberant movement, though in keeping with the vitality of the poem,

were apt to be overlaid in their own plenitude and to leave only an impression of bustling cheerfulness. If, however, the cantata has not made its way as might have been expected, it is probably not for intrinsic musical reasons, but for the circumstance that Sir George Dyson's setting of the same words had a nine-years start and had found favour with choral societies, which would hardly be likely to undertake two settings of the same poem together. Perhaps, too, provincial singers are unwilling to pay such unqualified compliments to a metropolis which in their view already gets far too much attention !

The poem '*In Honour of the City of London*', is the work of the Scottish poet, William Dunbar (c. 1460—c. 1520), who being a Lowlander, wrote not in Gaelic but in Chaucerian English, which has been retained unmodernized in the present setting by Walton. How a Scot came to be so fulsome about the Sassenach capital is not clear unless he really was impressed by London. Or was it rather due to the official necessity of pulling off the royal marriage between King James IV and Margaret Tudor in 1501, which was the occasion of his visit to London ? In any case his handsome compliments make a fine piece of occasional verse which has survived by reason of its other, more intrinsic merits.

London, thou art of townes A per se.

Soveraigne of cities, seemliest in sight,  
Of high renown, riches and royaltie ;

Of lordis, barons, and many a goodly knyght ;  
Of most delectable lusty ladies bright ;

Of famous prelatiſ in habitis clericaliſ ;  
Of merchauntis full of substaunce and of myght :

London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

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Gladdith<sup>1</sup> anon, thou lusty Troy novaunt,<sup>2</sup>  
 Citie that some tyme clepéd was New Troy ;  
 In all the erth, imperiall as thou stant,  
 Pryncesse of townés of pleasure and of joy,  
 A richer restith under no Christen roy ;  
 For manly power with craftis naturall,  
 Fourmeth<sup>3</sup> none fairer sith the flode of Noy :  
 London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Gemme of all joye, jasper of jocunditie,  
 Most myghty carbuncle of vertue and valour ;  
 Strong Troy in vigour and in strenuytie ;  
 Of royall Cities rose and geraflour<sup>4</sup> ;  
 Empress of townes, exalt in honour ;  
 In beawtie beryng the crone imperiall ;  
 Swete paradise precelling in pleasure ;  
 London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Above all ryvers thy Ryver hath renowne,  
 Whose beryall stremys, pleasaunt and preclare,  
 Under thy lusty wallys renneth down,  
 Where many a swan doth swymme with wyngis fair ;  
 Where many a barge doth saile and row with are ;  
 Where many a ship doth rest with top royall.  
 O towne of townes ! patrone and not compare,  
 London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Upon thy lusty Brigge of pylers white  
 Been merchauntis full royall to behold.

<sup>1</sup> Gladdith=rejoice.

<sup>2</sup> novaunt=new.

<sup>3</sup> Fourmeth=appeareth.

<sup>4</sup> geraflour=gilliflower.

*'In Honour of the City of London'* 55

Upon thy stretis go'th many a semely knyght  
In velvet gownes and in cheynes of gold.  
By Julyus Cesar thy Tour founded of old  
May be the hous of Mars victoriall,  
Whose artillary with tonge shall not be told :  
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Strong be thy wallis that about the standis ;  
Wise be the people that within the dwellis ;  
Fresh is thy ryver with his lusty strandis ;  
Blith be thy chirches, wele sownyng be thy bellis ;  
Rich be thy merchauntis in substance that excellis ;  
Fair be their wives, right lovesom, white and small ;  
Clere be thy virgyns, lusty under kellis<sup>1</sup> :  
London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

These words are set for chorus in four parts, expanding to five, six, seven or eight at pleasure, with accompaniment for the ordinary large orchestra, including piccolo and harp, but without double bassoon or bass clarinet. No soloists are employed. The main tonality is a kind of E. The several verses are differentiated in their setting mainly by differences of musical rhythm. Thus the first verse is set in  $3/2$  time, the second and third in  $9/8$  and  $6/8$ , verse 4, which pictures the River Thames, in a broad and sustained  $4/2$ , the Bridge in verse 5 is built on 'pylers' of four alternating with three crotchets in a bar, and the last verse returns in the main to triple measure, sometimes simple ( $3/2$ ) and sometimes compound ( $9/4$ ).

The cantata opens with an invocation to London in

<sup>1</sup> Lusty under kellis (cauls)=gaily dressed in hoods.

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solid chords, but a figure is soon introduced into the orchestra and is thereafter worked with some persistence :—



The ' famous prelates ' are introduced appropriately in plainsong with a counterpoint in third species (though played uneclesiastically on strings pizzicato). The rich merchants are accompanied by Ex. 4, which therefore must be the symbol of ' substance and myght '. There is a short interlude between the first and second verses of an energy that recalls passages in *Belshazzar's Feast* and scored with Walton's characteristically crackling orchestration. Verse 2 is marked ' con agilità e molto ritmico ' and two new short figures are introduced into the accompaniment—a group of oscillating semiquavers and a brief undulating arpeggio.



The chorus is content to sing in four parts lightened occasionally by taking turns two by two ; in the third verse there is a good deal of homophonic signing which

## *'In Honour of the City of London'* 57

culminates in a passage of exultant thirds in contrary motion. There is a change of mood as well as rhythm at the fourth verse ; female voices in four parts are employed to sing the praises of the river in long flowing lines of melody, accompanied by a murmur of triplets in the orchestra. The men enter for the last two lines of invocation to the 'towne of townes' and the verse finishes in unaccompanied eight-part harmony. Another interlude (*brioso*) intervenes before London Bridge and the Tower are described. This verse is the men's turn. The basses lead off

### Ex.6



The tenors follow

### Ex.7

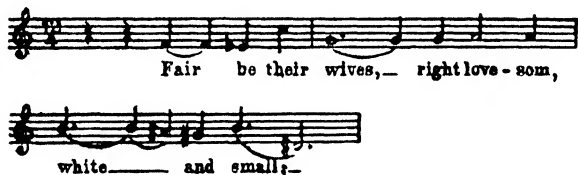


Comparison of the two leads, Ex. 6 and Ex. 7, shows a typical example of Walton's transformation of themes. This is the course of the music's bubbling energy and also of the feeling that somehow it all hangs together

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just as much as if the imitation was strict and the recapitulation exact. Another example is provided in the next verse by the ground bass that is no repetitive ground, upon which the strong walls are raised in unison (i.e., strictly speaking in octaves). There is a touch of illustration by means of rhythmic chords on the brass at the reference to 'artillery', followed by runs in thirds by way of contrast for the refrain. The sturdy bass already laid down for the massive walls is continued for the strong tide of the river with triplets again playing on its surface ; there is a suggestion of bells in the part writing ; the wives are described thus :—

Ex.8



which is the theme in augmented time-values that has already been heard in the third verse at the words 'Swete paradise precelling'. Here in the later context the trend towards E major is confirmed and in that key, with all the bells ringing, the final apostrophe of the city is made in eight parts over a busily humming bass.



## *Violin Concerto*

THE Violin Concerto was commissioned from Walton by Jascha Heifetz, who reserved it for his own performance exclusively for two years. In the spring of 1939 the composer visited the violinist in America to incorporate into the solo part Mr. Heifetz's own suggestions for presenting the substance of the music in the most effective light that violin technique could cast upon it. The last touch was put to the score in New York on 2nd June, 1939. Six months later (on 7th December) it received its first performance at Cleveland, Ohio, under Artur Rodzinski. It was subsequently given with success by other American conductors, including Eugene Goossens, who recorded it with the Cincinnati Orchestra and Mr. Heifetz in the solo part. The Concerto's journey to England, where it was first performed at a Philharmonic concert at the Albert Hall on 1st November, 1941, did not escape the hazards of war. Mr. Heifetz's own proofs bearing his own bowing and fingering of the solo part were lost in the Atlantic, but a photographic copy made in New York as a precaution was safely delivered by air to the Oxford University Press in London. A set of gramophone records was also lost in transit, so that neither the composer nor Mr. Henry Holst, who together undertook its first presentation to an English audience, had heard the work before the concert.

The first movement of this violin concerto resembles the first movement of the Viola Concerto in being the slowest of the three ; it is deeply felt but of less weight

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and substance than first movements used to be, thus reserving for the Finale not only the summary and conclusion of the argument, but the greatest length and the symphonic range of an allegro movement. The actual tempo of this predominantly lyrical movement is 'andante tranquillo'. The key is definitely B minor. The solo instrument leads off with the first theme without any opening orchestral tutti, as in most modern concertos. The orchestra, however, has just enough time, before the soloist begins, to establish an accompanimental figure of a decisive rhythmic shape.

Ex. 1



The very first motif of (a) infects the whole movement, though the Scotch snap is pervasive rather than emphatic. The figure (b) is maintained with constantly varying instrumentation: the clarinet is succeeded by the muted viola, and the second violin takes a hand when it passes into its range; to and fro it goes on these shifting tints of what is basically the same sombre tone colour, while muted horns hold the softest possible chord. This being the background, the tune stands out in relief without raising its voice above the mood of noble and dreamy (*sognando*) melancholy—A. The tune, however, is only one part of a composite first subject. Below it the bassoon and cello spell out a long-breathed counter-theme in the tenor which must not be overlooked—B.

## Ex. 2

Solo Violin

A

B

Bassoon

*p*

*mf*

*tr*

*y*

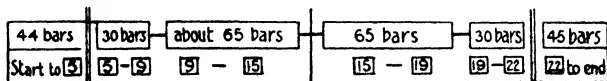
*3*

The opening leap is naturally an octave to strengthen the effect of anacrusis, but the interval that gives its character to the melody is the seventh, as can be observed not only in the second and third occurrences of this significant leap, but elsewhere between the pivot notes of the swaying tune. For its full statement it takes the orthodox sixteen bars.

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The architectural ground-plan of the first movement is a very much modified sonata form, in which sheer quantity and geography override, but do not dispense with, the classical principles of balance of subjects and balance of keys.

Geographically speaking the Exposition of the first subject, which runs from the opening to figure [5] in the score and quantitatively occupies forty-four bars at a tempo of 'andante tranquillo', is exactly counter-balanced at the close of the movement from figure [22] to the end by forty-five bars of the same thematic material at the same tempo. The middle section of the movement between [5] and [22] is divided geographically by a Cadenza. Quantitatively, however, the Cadenza belongs to the first half of this middle section, since we find the following proportions : from [5] to [9], which comprises the second subject of the Exposition, is thirty bars ; from [9] to [15], containing the first part of the Development and the Cadenza, is some sixty odd bars (bar lines give out, naturally enough, amid the excitement of a cadenza) ; the stretch from [15] to [19], which deals with the Development of the second subject and other matters, is also something over sixty bars long ; from [19] to [22], where the Recapitulation begins, it is just over thirty bars. So we have a formal lay-out, almost like that of an Italian garden, thus :—



In terms of sonata form the movement can be analysed thus :—

Exposition : first subject in B minor, Ex. 2, A and B, as far as figure [5] ; second subject in E flat minor and E minor, Ex. 3, figures [5] to [9].

Development : first subject, cadenza, second subject, orchestral tutti and third solo from [9] to [22].

Recapitulation : first subject in B minor and reference to, but no complete restatement of, the second subject, from [22] to the end.

Now to the contents of these various components.

The chief melody, Ex. 2 A, is stated by the soloist, while the bassoon and cello play the counter-theme, Ex. 2 B. When this is done the orchestra takes its turn in announcing the main theme, or at any rate the first part of it, Ex. 2 A, though the soloist soon claims it once more. This restatement of the theme begins to veer flatwards rather curiously, with the result that the second subject arrives in the 'wrong' key. This more flowing but shorter-phrased tune, Ex. 3 below, appears with a signature of six flats, i.e. the key has missed its mark by a tone and a half, so that we are landed in nine degrees of flatness, and the general pitch of the music lies a diminished fourth instead of a perfect fifth higher. This is carrying out on the greatly magnified scale of key-interval an idiosyncrasy constantly found in Walton's melodic intervals. The substitution of an octave for a seventh in Ex. 2 is a mild example ; a more striking

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instance is to be found in the viola concerto's first movement (see p. 42), where ninths and sevenths alternate with octaves.

Arrived, then, at this oblique-angled key the movement announces its second theme promptly upon the orchestra. It is a simple theme derived from *y* in Ex. 2b climbing and declining in two-bar phrases



The accompaniment is an arpeggio figure of a conventional shape in quavers consisting of flowing triads, but containing an alien note—notably a seventh in a strong position. This feature (triad with added note) is found also in the soloist's figuration. The solo violin, when it comes, as it does almost immediately, to make its statement of the new theme (Ex. 3), tires of the remote obscurity of E flat minor and decides on the sub-dominant minor of the main key for its highly ornamental version of this second theme. The signature is changed by cancelling all flats; the key, however, is not C but rather a very unstable E minor. The general character of the music is now restless, and almost every chord of the harmony contains a discordant seventh. The interval of the seventh, in fact is the basic germ of the music. There is much tempo rubato until the soloist broadens out on his G string in a little codetta which thematically seems to be an epitome of Ex. 1 and Ex. 2.

Ex.4



This is the signal for the development section to begin.

At first sight the tune propounded by the horns and later echoed by the soloist a semitone higher is not an obvious relation of Ex. 2 A.

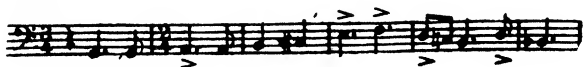
Ex.5



But scrutinized more closely it will be seen to bear the main features—the emphatic anacrusis, the octave leap, the contour of bars 2 and 3 being the equivalent of the second complete bar of Ex. 2 A and the quavers the equivalent of the triplet figure in the second, sixth and tenth bars. It is in fact all but a note-for-note repetition of the first seven bars of Ex. 2 A, but varied in rhythm, texture and pace (which is quicker).

The next text for discussion is a version of Ex. 2 B propounded by trombones at [11]

Ex.6



and presently repeated by trumpets and wood-wind. Just  
E

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before the Cadenza (at [13]) 2 A reaches its most remote transformation

**Ex.7**



After the Cadenza it is the turn of the second subject, Ex. 3, to be enlarged upon. Enlarged it is, in the technical sense of augmentation. It is accompanied by a conventionalized five-note figure derived from the opening of Ex. 2 A over an um-pum-pum bass. This broadening of the theme, the steady maintenance of a symmetrical accompaniment and the general lowering of the dynamics, make a welcome lull—is it not a common function of second subjects to modify the aggressive character of their more masculine partner? However, the first subject is not to be silenced. At [18] the soloist plays 2 A in outline very high up; at [19] 2 B launches an orchestral tutti very low down; at [20], a phrase of 2 B, hitherto not very prominent, viz. its last three bars, emerges; and the entrance of the solo after [21] is also based on this passage and leads into the Recapitulation.

This Recapitulation is very complete, as far as the first subject is concerned, the orchestra taking A and the soloist B to begin with and subsequently reversing roles. Near the end of the movement there are two short allusions to the second subject, Ex. 3, just sufficient to make it felt amid the attenuation of the main theme and of the general texture.

### *Second Movement.*

Technical virtuosity is a proper and indeed a neces-



sary ingredient in a concerto. In this second movement the violin goes through its paces at a pace 'presto capriccioso alla napolitana', and since the listener to an actual performance will be far more aware of what the violin is doing than of any thematic or harmonic peculiarities upon which the orchestra may be engaged, so the score reader will be wise to look at the solo line first. There are no formal puzzles to trouble him since the movement is a reasonably regular Scherzo with a Trio. The Trio is a self-contained section labelled a Canzonetta.

Tonality is not quite so straightforward, since the main theme is characterized by the interval of the augmented fifth, which is subversive of key. But the second theme is in C sharp minor comfortably enough. It consists, incidentally, of a sustained double-stopped cantilena—as in the Viola Concerto and in the first movement of this concerto parallel sixths, with their infallibly and inevitably romantic atmosphere, sooner or later obtrude their presence upon the scene. The Trio is in a kind of flat C major. Its tune

### Ex.8



is in C major by inspection, as the mathematicians say. But it is harmonized over an A flat and a B flat, and when the soloist starts to play triplets over it, A's are always flattened and B's, though they only occur as grace notes, are still flat. So that the mode is not mixolydian (for although its third is sharp its sixth is flat), nor

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is it Aeolian (since though its sixth and seventh are flat its third is sharp), nor is it Dorian (again because its third is sharp and its sixth flat), but is a hybrid mode with one sharp and one flat tetrachord. An ambiguous but sharp-flavoured tonality for the Scherzo is offset by a flat C for the Trio.

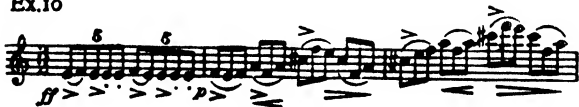
This precarious tonality (which first feels like F, then is tugged towards B flat but is ultimately shown to be A) is thrown at the listener like a question in the opening phrase—

Ex.9



which the soloist then proceeds to spell out in the reverse, upward direction and in a form more apt to his bow

Ex.10



One can hear the accents as the flying bow skims up the arpeggio with these periodic pressures on the strings. It is instructive to set out the violin's varied statements of this theme, since such a table shows both the kind of technical exploits which Mr. Heifetz has invited and the characteristic Waltonian inability to tolerate identical statements of his themes. Here they are.

EX.11



(Even the incidence of the 'hairpins' of expression and the number of notes grasped in a single stroke of the bow is different.)

EX.12 Rubato quasi ad lib.



EX.13



EX.14

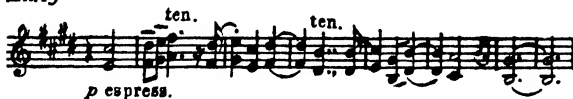


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Its final appearance is as Ex. 11 with the first bar played tremolando and sul ponticello.

From these quotations it will be seen that close study of this movement will provide ample interest in matters of detail, but the pace is such that the effect on the ear is one more example of that sharp, bright, dangerous and flickering tone characteristic of Walton's music, which one is inclined to attribute to his scoring, but is really inherent in its substance. The ambiguity of key is an instance of this superpiquancy. When one hears Ex. 9 and Ex. 10 at the beginning of the movement the tonality deludes the ear into thinking it as F with a sharpened fifth. In the opening bars there is no B flat, but when the violinist counterstates the theme B flat is not only present to his arpeggio, but the whole passage is harmonized over a bass that swings from low F to B flat as from dominant to tonic. Is the key then F or B flat? The question is not answered nor the ambiguity resolved, since a bridge passage turns aside into E major—this is where Ex. 12 occurs. But in the final restatement the crucial phrase, Ex. 9, leads quite decisively to a close in A, and one can see that A would round it off on its previous occurrences. So we find ourselves moving from a first subject in A to a second in C sharp minor. Here is the second subject over a waltz accompaniment—

Ex. 15



After this the first theme recurs over some rather black harmony in the form of Ex. 13.

The tune of the Trio, Ex. 8, is announced first by the horn of the orchestra. The soloist ultimately gets it and plays it two and then three octaves higher. Here it is with its sub-fusc bass

Ex. 16



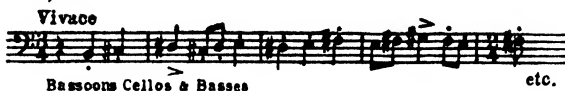
This is a slower, more lyrical section and elicits from the soloist, before it is over, some more double-stopped cantilena. The Scherzo returns in the form of Ex. 14 and recalls briefly its second subject in double-stopped sixths and the tune of the Trio before the crisp restatement of Ex. 11 brings the movement to its end on that elusive, but at last disclosed, chord of A. The Neapolitan Scherzo, with its hints of the Tarantella, and the Canzonetta Trio give an Italian character to music which was in fact composed in that country.

### *Finale.*

In this movement, expanded to contain a long reference to the main tune of the first movement as well as a cadenza that grows out of it, there is comparative economy of material. The two principal themes are sharp-pointed, the one gruff and the other shrill—though naturally they change their tone, if not altogether their temper, in the course of the movement :

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### Ex.17



and

### Ex 18



Ex. 17 leads off in the orchestra, is taken up by the solo violin in double stops, is harmonized in solid chords and shared between the two parties in short antiphonal lengths. Ex. 18 follows immediately, but soon makes way for the sort of more stable melody one expects in a well conducted second subject

### Ex.19



This rhapsodic utterance, marked 'flessibile', is appropriately accompanied by violas and harp, a romantic combination controlled however by the establishment of a regular pattern. It lasts longer than its appearance on

paper would at first sight suggest, since the tempo is three times as slow as that of Ex. 17 and Ex. 18, which must be regarded as together constituting the first subject. The section beginning with their alternation and elaboration is the Development, which starts promptly as soon as Ex. 19 has fully extended its cantilena.

Owing to the difficulty of describing musical events in words the account of what happens in the development sections of symphonic movements is usually scanty. Yet it is just precisely what happens to the themes which have been so carefully delineated that constitutes the chief intellectual interest of sonata form. Here it must suffice to note that by having a double-barrelled first subject the composer complicates his plot and increases the possibilities of adventure for his themes. In the first movement the two components of the first subject occur simultaneously ; here in the finale they are stated in succession until the middle of the Development at [59], when they are put in counterpoint one against the other by soloist against orchestra. They go further : they augment and diminish themselves (in the technical sense) as they parley together. Augmentation, it may be observed in passing, is very extensively employed in this Concerto as a means of securing internal cohesion.

There is a cadenza in the middle of this Development, as correspondingly in the first movement, but it is short and not sufficiently demonstrative to challenge comparison with the big cadenza which occurs later in the movement at the conventional place within sight of the end.

The violinist's trills lead now to a change of time and of key for a restatement of the second subject, Ex. 19, which is taken here instead of later in the Recapitu-

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lation for a reason that will appear when that point is reached. It is fully stated in the tonic major key of B by the orchestra, while the soloist descants over it a slowed down version of Ex. 17, thus linking the two principal subjects.

This more expansive moment of high-flown melody over long-drawn counterpoints from wood-wind and strings speaking in pairs (violin and flute, violoncello and clarinet, violin and oboe) and soft mysterious tremolando accompaniment, brings the Development to an end. A particularly brusque and low-pitched version of Ex. 17 over a rolling three-note pedal marks the beginning of the Recapitulation.

The marked rhythms of Ex. 17 and Ex. 18 are excellent landmarks, but they are both only the starting points of quite lengthy extensions, in which the solo violin may indulge in passages which develop many other rhythmic features, sometimes for instance steady crotchet chords, sometimes steady triplet quavers. But the orchestra holds on to Ex. 17 and Ex. 18 as to the reins of the movement. Instead of the Recapitulation of Ex. 19, which received a full and more than usually (for Walton) exact restatement in the Development section of the movement, we find a passage of similarly lyrical character, which turns out to be the main theme of the first movement stated in the double-stopped parallel sixths that Walton is accustomed to use in his string writing for the purpose of intensifying his melody. After a few bars of the intruding theme, Ex. 17 steals in quietly in the bass, making rather a dry sound on bassoon and pizzicato violoncellos in contrast to the luscious *sostenuto* of the solo instrument, but knitting these two distant ideas together.



The tonality of the passage is interesting. The tune is at the same pitch as in the first movement, i.e. in B minor—no doubt the more certainly to recall it to the mind of the listener—but the signature now is one of three sharps, and instead of a tonic triad for background we have a chord of the tonic seventh (i.e., assuming B minor, which is certainly the key of the tune, to be the predominant tonality). The issue is further complicated by the establishment of another triple pedal point, F sharp, B, E (reading downwards), and the basses sway arpeggio-wise to and fro over these pedal notes, gravitating towards E, but finally coming out into a bright B major for an accompanied cadenza. The accompaniment is poised quite in the conventional manner over a six-four chord on F sharp, while the cadenza itself is occupied in turn with Ex. 19 played slowly in thirds, with Ex. 17 also in thirds, proceeding after a pause to Ex. 19, and finishing with flourishes based on Ex. 2A in diminution. From cadenza to coda: the orchestra resumes Ex. 17 ‘*deliberatamente accelerando poco a poco*’ until, with a fanfare from the brass, the movement passes into a quick march over a striding bass which bears the Concerto to an end that may justly be called triumphant. For the final page is simply and clear-cut in rhythm and decisive in tonality: to make the sharpness of B major sharp beyond a doubt the final chord is a tonic seventh.

The relationship with the first movement is established through the kinship of the first subject of the first movement with the second subject of the finale, i.e., of Ex. 2 and Ex. 19. The use of a subject based on Ex. 17 as a counterpoint to Ex. 19 ensures the unity of the finale. All three themes are assembled in the cadenza, which

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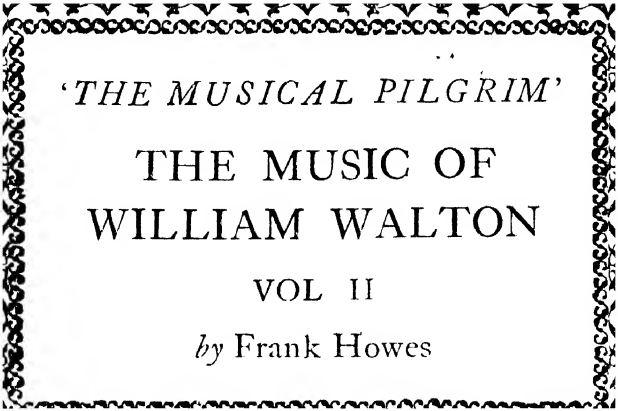
thus has unusual structural importance, where they are seen to be congruent with one another and with some of the figuration that the soloist has employed in his task of carrying the whole movement with hardly a bar's intermission to its climax and conclusion.











*'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'*

THE MUSIC OF  
WILLIAM WALTON

VOL II

*by* Frank Howes













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## PREFACE

This is the second "Pilgrim" of two devoted to the analytical study of the compositions of William Walton. The first volume deals with the early Pianoforte Quartet, Façade, Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra and the cantata "In Honour of the City of London".

F. H.

### *Note to 1947 Impression*

This impression embodies minor textual corrections and contains a Postscript to the Concluding Note (see p. 75). It should also be noted that since the first edition of the book, the composer made a further revision, in 1943, of the Sinfonia Concertante, in which some changes of scoring and of distribution of material between piano and orchestra were carried out. In this revised version it has been recorded. *Belshazzar's Feast* is a further addition to the recordings mentioned in this volume



## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

WILLIAM WALTON, born at Oldham in Lancashire on 29th March, 1902, has now reached middle life and has established himself as the leading English composer of his generation. His ambition has led him to write in the larger forms and his ability has enabled him to fill them with success. He belongs to no school and his training was largely self-conducted. His earliest teacher in music was his father and he went through one of the most fruitful training institutions open to an English boy—a cathedral choir. But his music from the earliest days shows strong individuality. Mr. Basil Allchin, who was assistant organist at Oxford Cathedral when Walton was a choirboy there, tells that he used to fill reams of manuscript paper with notes, mostly cast in the form of big motets for double choir, that somewhat baffled his choirmasters to whom he showed these juvenilia, but he was encouraged to continue along lines which, if obscure, were certainly not aimless. In due course the Dean of Christ Church who at the time was Dr. Thomas Banks Strong, Doctor of Music as well as Divinity, took a hand in shaping his career by passing him almost straight from choirboy to undergraduate. At sixteen he matriculated at Christ Church and during his Oxford days had some instruction from Sir Hugh Allen. Of systematic formal teaching he has had none and he can be said to be self-

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taught after boyhood. Unlike other composers who had similarly picked up their training for themselves—Elgar and Boughton come to mind—Walton was not late in maturing sufficiently to make his mark as a young man. His Piano Quartet of 1918 was performed and subsequently published, and in 1923 he secured international recognition at the Salzburg meeting of the International Society of Contemporary Music. He produced a master work in the Viola Concerto when he was twenty-seven and had written a powerful symphony by the time he was thirty-three.

There is a sense however in which he was not fully mature when he appeared before the public as a fully fledged composer. His early years as a musician coincided with the post-Armistice conditions which were marked by a furious passion for dancing, the vogue of jazz, a cynical wit, and an anti-romantic outlook. Walton has always been *persona grata* with the juries who choose the works for the International Festivals of Contemporary Music, and to them romance was taboo because it was not contemporary. Music, like manners, had to be hard-boiled. But in the 'thirties this prohibition relaxed somewhat and the relaxation coincided with the development of Walton's own temperament, in which there is plainly a strain of brooding and almost melancholy feeling that is quite different from the sharp intelligence and smart exterior which are other conspicuous features of his style. A comparison of the Viola Concerto with *Facade* shows this difference.

From his Christ Church days Walton took away as technical equipment no more than an ingrained ability to write for voices, but the helpful influence of the Dean, and his friendship with Sacheverell Sitwell, which was

afterwards extended to the other members of that talented and artistic family, were of incalculable value to him. His musical career did not however develop along the academic lines that radiate from Oxford. The landmarks in it are the appearances of his works in the programmes of the International Festivals of Contemporary Music, and it was from these meetings abroad that his fame began to spread through England, though the authorities of the Leeds Festival must have the credit for recognizing his significance and including works from his pen in their solidly orthodox programmes. After a String Quartet at the first of the I.S.C.M. Festivals at Salzburg in 1923, Walton's name subsequently appeared at Zurich in 1926 with the *Portsmouth Point* overture, at Siena in 1928 with *Facade*, at Liege in 1930 with the Viola Concerto, and at Amsterdam in 1933 with *Belshazzar's Feast*. By this time his position at home had already been established, since *Belshazzar's Feast* had had its first performance at the Leeds Festival of 1931.

As an executant Walton is a capable conductor of his own works, but, unlike his friend and contemporary, Constant Lambert, with whom he has much in common in his general taste and outlook upon music, he has never plunged into the hurly-burly of practical music-making. For a good many years he lived with the Sitwells and has subsequently spent much of his time quietly in the country. It is always something of a surprise—though there is no real reason why it should be—that a person of such quiet manner and of such retiring habits produces music so charged with electric power.

## *Sinfonia Concertante*

THE first of Walton's ambitious works, works, that is, with a more serious aim than the satirical *Facade* and the crackling coruscations of *Portsmouth Point*, was the *Sinfonia Concertante* for piano and orchestra. It is neither a symphony nor a concerto, but its design in three movements brings it within the generous connotation of that elastic term, 'symphony', and the virtuoso writing for the solo piano gives it an obvious superficial resemblance to a concerto. There is no need therefore to quarrel on *a priori* grounds with the title, which, considering how lax is music's terminology, gives a fair indication of the work's nature. Any criticism by the ear that it has been defrauded of its expectation to hear something in the symphonic style, as 'symphonic' came to be understood in the late nineteenth century, can be accounted for by the origin of the work, which was first conceived for a ballet and laid out provisionally for piano duet. Inflation of the material is unavoidable when it is heavily scored for large orchestra (with three each of the wind), and the revised version suffers from a certain intractability as a result of the change of aim from ballet to symphony. Thus, the appendage to the finale of a coda harking back to the first movement and consisting of a mixture of elements from both first and last movements is a little artificial, but it is saved from arbitrariness by a latent relationship in the thematic material of all three movements.

The idea of a ballet for Diaghileff was dropped, but the music was plainly too good to waste. So it was retrieved by a change of purpose, similar, though opposite to that which had made Stravinsky, also under stimulus from Diaghileff, turn his Concertstück for piano and orchestra into *Petrushka*. The slow movement in particular had to be salved, for in it appears for the first time in a mature expression the composer's streak of deeply romantic feeling, hitherto buried under smart and brilliant dialogue but destined to emerge even more fully developed into the light in the viola concerto.

The date of composition in the revised and definitive form was 1927, and the dedication is to the Sitwells, a movement apiece to Osbert, Edith and 'Sachie' respectively. The first performance was at a Philharmonic concert at Queen's Hall on 5th January 1928, under Ernest Ansermet with York Bowen as the pianist. It has never enjoyed a great vogue, but it keeps its place before the public. Angus Morrison, who knew the work from its inception, is the pianist most frequently associated with performances of it. Structurally it is not in any of the set orthodox forms, but it is lucid and easy to follow because the themes are pithy and clear-cut. That they are also more stable in shape than is customary with Walton may be due to their original designation for dancing. The characteristic tendency to polymorphism of themes, however, persists in so far as themes in each movement seem to be variations of one basic idea. Observe, for example, the kinship of Ex. 5, Ex. 6, Ex. 7, and Ex. 8, and compare them with Ex. 13 and with Ex. 18, which is at once an epitome and an augmentation of them.

The first movement is prefaced by a massive introduction (*maestoso*), quasi-Handelian in the tread of its

## 12 *The Music of William Walton*

themes and in its general motion, but far from Handelian in harmony. The opening chords as played by the piano and duplicated by the strings, are full of 'added' notes, which thicken the texture, of which the main strand is this theme

Ex. 1



There is a balancing phrase and then the pattern is torn across by some impertinences, chromatic chirrupings from the wind, little staccato snatches from the strings, pizzicato interjections and the like. This is the 'bright young thing' of the day warning us not to mistake Ex. 1 and its subsequent counterpoise too pompously or too soulfully in spite of the marks *cantabile* and *rubato*. There are more twitterings and a repetition of Ex. 1 which dies down and clears out in order to project the main movement with the greater impetus. This lull contains the phrase.

Ex. 2



which perhaps accounts for a vague recollection that I came away from the first performance under the impression that Elgar had influenced the composer in the new work. At any rate that is all the Elgar I can find in the score to-day.

The piano in double octaves and the horn announce the first tune of the 'allegro spiritoso' in canon.

### Ex.3



This D major tune is harmonized by a chord not of tonic or dominant but of G. Bias to the subdominant (or flat) side of the key becomes a definite shift in that direction when the sharps are cancelled, and B flat and A flat basses appear in the thrusts of repartee which form the link between the statement in D and the counter-statement in D flat of Ex. 3. The link now leads to a second subject 'poco meno mosso' in A minor

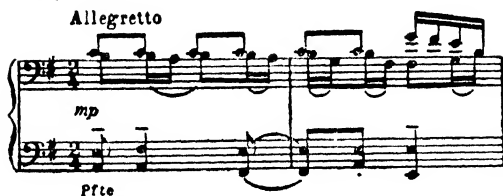
### Ex. 4



This is repeated by the piano, developed and briefly extended by the wood-wind until another link, this time of staccato chords in semiquavers, leads to a third subject. This is not presented at once, but evolved from the two bars of a droning, hurdy-gurdy figure started up by the piano alone

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Ex.5



The tonality of this second subject is interesting. Both Ex. 4 and Ex. 5 pivot on or around an A. The tonality of the passage dominated by Ex. 4 is an Aeolian A disturbed by a strongly placed B $\flat$ , which suggests a bias towards D minor. But the flat is cancelled in one of Walton's quite characteristic oscillations of modality, and the feeling of the passage as a whole denotes A as its tonic, but leaves the mode ambiguous. In Ex. 5 A still persists as a powerful harmonic influence, but it has now become a subdominant since the tonal centre has clearly shifted to F. Ex. 6 is definitely in E minor.

Ex. 5 is taken over from the piano by the strings so as to leave the soloist free to make a little waif of a tune out of its semiquavers. Over and over it goes, but there is more of it to come. The orchestra has a literal re-statement of Ex. 5, to which the piano adds some further reflections on the melancholy of plagal harmonies in a key like E minor. What finally emerges is Ex. 6.

Ex.6



After more rhythmic variations in Walton's polymorphic manner the second link passage of staccato

chords leads to a recapitulation of the first subject, Ex. 3, played in unison by wind, strings and xylophone splashed with chords from the piano. This works up a powerful noise, but it is not the climax, which is only achieved when Ex. 4 and Ex. 6 are delivered simultaneously both in their original and in an augmented form, making four lines of counterpoint in all. The piano with flute and piccolo has Ex. 6 ; the strings and oboes have Ex. 4, while a clarinet, horn, bassoon and tuba play the same theme in augmentation ; Ex. 6 is pounded out also in augmentation by the trombones and contrabasses. When the tornado of counterpoint subsides an abstract of Ex. 6 makes a momentary lull of quietness before Ex. 3 breaks into a clattering coda.

If the form is unusual it is clear, it is free from padding, and the links are as sharply defined as the themes they connect ; as befits dance music there is no process of development in the ordinary technical sense but only, in the case of the third theme, a process of emergence which does not involve subdividing the theme into component pieces, as development so often does. This tune has a touch of the nostalgic romanticism which is the predominant mood of the slow movement. To which we now come.

Two bars of introduction

Ex.7

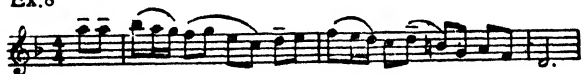
*Andante comodo*



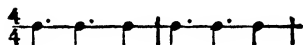
## 16 *The Music of William Walton*

again propound an ambiguity of key. The treble is in D minor, the tenor might be in E minor or A minor, and a pedal G holds them in equilibrium until it moves to A, which it treats as a dominant, at the moment when the main theme, enunciated by a solo violin,

Ex. 8



declares itself gently, but decisively, for D minor. It is, however, a D minor with a third that may be sharp, and a sixth that also may be sharpened without converting it into a major. The effect is a minor key of great poignancy, which is enhanced by the instruments which play the tune (Ex. 8), first a solo violin and then an oboe and then again a cor anglais. The internal rhythmic organization of Ex. 8 is determined by the movement of the harmony, as can be seen from the bass line, which proceeds consistently thus



The third statement of the tune finishes on a firm unison D at the tenth bar. A counterbalancing theme is thereupon stated in conclusion of the first subject. This consists in the first place of some sliding consecutive sixths with a hint of false relationship in their uncertainty

It is repeated by cor anglais, by bassoon, by violins, by clarinet. The phrase based on sixths which rounded off

## 18 *The Music of William Walton*

the first subject is now repeated a tone lower in inverted counterpoint and with other elaborations. A sudden *pianissimo* recalls Ex. 7. With it goes a swaying octave figure,

Ex 11



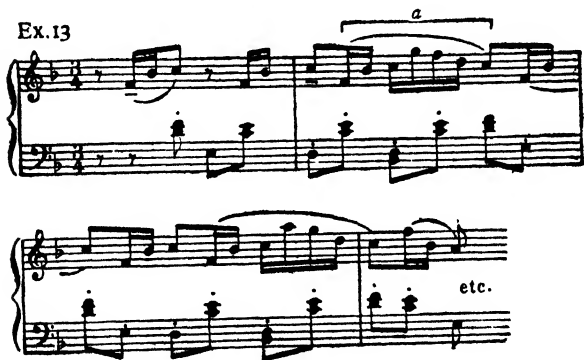
What is needed in a third and concluding movement is a burst of high spirits and not too much contemplation or counterpoint. So Walton writes a Stravinskyish sort of movement with two principal subjects (in F and B flat) rounded off with a coda in D major, based on the introduction. (There is counterpoint in this coda, to be sure, but let it be considered in its turn.) The movement begins 'allegro molto' with a dominant tonic cadence and a fanfare and on top of that a rattling octave figure from the piano. The perfect cadence pronouncing the key to be F is spelt thus—

EX 12



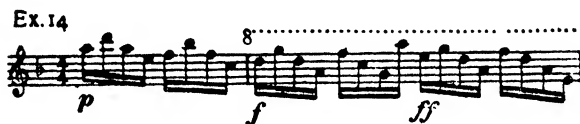
After this introduction the piano gives out the first main tune of a rondoish nature.

Ex. 13



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This six-bar theme, which derives its propulsive energy from Ex. 3 and its characteristic curve *a* from Ex. 6, is extended by the orchestra, with much neat passing, in the footballer's sense, between the forward line of the wood-wind. Its suggestion of a rondo is not taken up—the movement is no rondo because what follows is not an episode but a very substantial second subject, so substantial and elaborately organized as to defy summary description. We may, however, specify the following elements: the horns play chords of B flat on and off the beats in alternate bars, the strings pizzicato complete the framework rhythmically and harmonically (dissonant harmony, of course), and the piano gets busy with passage work like this



The wood-wind, assisted by the xylophone, spouts---spits perhaps would be the better word—some syncopation.





The brass punctuates this performance with

Ex 16



and finally, some bars later, come two other more sober elements which are ingeniously interlocked by manipulation of their phrase lengths,

Ex. 17



which is perhaps distantly related to Ex. 4, and

Ex. 18



which is an augmentation of the basic idea common to the two previous movements. Ex. 17 and Ex. 18 form a kind of middle section between two statements of Ex. 14 and Ex. 16—Ex. 15 does not appear at this point. We thus have a second subject, itself a structure in simple ternary form, which leads without any development section or other episode to a compressed recapitulation. The first subject, Ex. 13, reappears in F, shortened and lightly stated by woodwind instead of piano, which has to be content with an outline accompaniment. The second

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subject is even more curtailed : only four bars of Ex. 14 and Ex. 15 and their context are allowed to signify their formal attendance, when the interruption of Ex. 12 and the fanfare from the beginning of the movement preclude all possibility of further reference to Ex. 17 and Ex. 18, which, after all, had enjoyed considerable latitude of expression when they first occurred in the middle of the movement. The fanfare is elaborated and leads to a brief piano cadenza which in its turn heralds the return in D major of the Introduction of the first movement. This coda, however, is no simple transfer, and the composer makes it integral with the finale and a unifying force for the whole Sinfonia. Counterpoint, such as accounts for the compactness of the slow movement, is once more the method, but when all speak at once at the top of their voices the babel is such that the subtleties of augmentation may escape notice. What we have is Ex. 1 on flutes, first oboe, first trumpet and first violins at the same speed as at its original appearance, though it is now written out in notes of double value, the metronome mark being now  $\text{♩} = 60$  instead of  $\text{♩} = 60$  ; we have Ex. 1 in augmentation on trombones ; we have Ex. 3 on second oboe, horns and second trumpet at half its original speed though written in quavers as before ; we have Ex. 3 in augmentation, that is four times as slowly as in its original embodiment, on second clarinet, bassoon, tuba, cello and double bass. The drums roll and the piano rampages up and down playing Ex. 14 in octaves, but the commotion only lasts for three bars and the time broadens out while the tone dies down to permit another allusion to the first movement · its

third theme, the romantic tune of Ex. 6, is played as a solo by the cor anglais, bassoon and viola against a softly luminous background of trills and piano figuration, glockenspiel and string harmonics. This episode in its turn is soon swept aside by the final recurrence of the opening fanfare of the finale, which catches up in its sweep the salient features of the second subject, viz., the piano arpeggios of Ex. 14 and the glockenspiel-wind phrase Ex. 15. This coda, therefore, is compounded of many elements from different sources which in a short space cohere together themselves and give coherence to the whole work. The method of simultaneous re-statement of the main themes is thus employed in each of the three movements, and shows in an extreme form both the composer's attitude to counterpoint in symphonic writing and his practice of condensing his recapitulations.

*Belshazzar's Feast*

WALTON had already established himself as an orchestral composer even more decisively, for instance, than Elgar had done, though at a younger age, when he turned to the oratorio form, which sooner or later engages the attention of all British composers. The viola concerto bears the date 1929; *Belshazzar's Feast* was first performed at the Leeds Festival of 1931 under Dr. Malcolm Sargent and was heard shortly afterwards in London at a B.B.C. concert. Since then it has gone the rounds of all the big choral societies of the country and was performed at the International Contemporary Festival at Amsterdam in 1933. Before the composition of this cantata,

## 24 *The Music of William Walton*

which is dedicated to Lord Berners, Walton had only flirted with words at a distance in *Facade*. Now, relying perhaps on his choral experience as a boy at Oxford Cathedral, he boldly essays a big subject and produces a work whose sheer striking power was something quite new in English choral music.

The text of *Belshazzar's Feast* was put together by Mr. Osbert Sitwell and is an abridged and dramatized form of the narrative of the fall of Babylon in Daniel v., written therefore from the Jewish point of view and incorporating parts of two Psalms, 137 and 81. The work is continuous, and the divisions made in this note are solely for convenience of commentary. The composer, however, uses long pauses to mark the abrupt and dramatic changes in the narration of the story.

The vocal score gives but a pale reflection of the full score; the piano reduction cannot show the powerful and distinctive character of the instrumentation. The early part of the work is not merely dark but bitter, and contrives to match the ferocious hate which lies just beneath the mournful surface of the text. The exact flavour of Jewish nationalism is caught alike in the harsh substance of the music and in the instrumental dress which it wears. The passion and the sorrow break through in the long stretches of beautiful writing for unaccompanied voices. This indeed is one of the most remarkable features of the work: voices alone, orchestra alone, and voices and orchestra together form three distinct forces each of which is capable of gradation and climax in its own sort: they are set over against one another and reinforce each other's effect by their contrast. The orchestra employed is a very large one and its full resources are unleashed in a crescendo of barbaric

splendour in the chorus of praise to the heathen gods. It includes over and above the usual instruments of the full modern symphony orchestra an alto saxophone, an E flat clarinet (a military band instrument), and a piano-forte which is treated purely orchestrally ; the composer desires when possible to have separate brass bands to the right and left, in the manner prescribed by Berlioz for his Requiem. For the 'kitchen' department a large equipment of furniture is required : side-drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, glockenspiel, xylophone, gong, anvil, slapstick, and Chinese block. The score, however, is so arranged that performance of the work is possible without certain optional instruments. The cantata takes about forty minutes in performance.

Leading themes are exceptionally plastic. Their main outlines are clear enough, but no one form belongs more authentically to the idea it signifies than another. The composer has made a brilliant use of this plasticity in the chorus of Babylonian praise of the heathen deities (see Exx. 8-16), but the same principle is observed throughout the work, whose great vitality may be largely attributed to this constant adaptation of the theme to its environment. Thus a practice to which the composer had become increasingly prone was established in this cantata as a permanent feature of his style.

The opening bars may be quoted in their entirety, as they show Walton's characteristic use of dissonance, whether to give bite to his harmony or for the more specific purpose, as here, of illustrating the harshness of Isaiah's prophecy :

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## Ex.1

**Maestoso**

**TENORS**

Thus spake I - sai - ah, 'Thy sons that thou shalt be-

**BASSES**

-get, they shall be taken away and be eunuchs in the palace of the

kings of Bab - y - lon! etc.

Psalm 137 follows, prefaced by seven bars of orchestral prelude, in which an important theme is heard in the bass :

## Ex.2

**Con rubato**

**Viola**

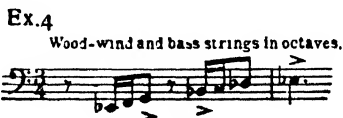
'Cellos & Basses  
col 8<sup>vo</sup>.....

The smoother beginning of this chorus, which almost immediately opens out into eight parts, may be quoted :



Phrases based on figure (a), which has some kinship with Ex. 2, recur in all parts of the score. The violoncellos and the wood-wind especially make much of its distinctive curve. The dark colours of these opening pages are applied with bass clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, double bassoon and trombones ; the violins are not heard at all until the word ' song ' ; the piano is used to make the edge of the striding bass more incisive. When the destruction of Babylon is contemplated in the last sentence of the chorus, not only the percussion but the brass is used to jab the texture with baleful rhythms.

A new figure, terse and sturdy, is heard before the indignant question is asked ' How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ? ' (which is afterwards repeated unaccompanied *meno mosso* more in sorrowful despair than in rage) :



## 28 *The Music of William Walton*

This is accompanied by insistent and angry protest from the brass—

Ex 4a

Muted Trumpets and Trombones.

Wind

Strings

et simile

It does not persist for long but it is heard again when the destruction of Babylon is so ardently desired at the end of the Psalm. The baritone soloist now joins in antiphony with the chorus against an urgent accompaniment made of the figure—

Ex 5

and a new version of figure (a) of Ex. 3 is heard, first high on the flute and oboe and then from the sopranos of the chorus—

Ex.6

Oh - Je - ru - sa - lem

The opening music of Ex. 3 returns again, followed by the vicious figures of Ex. 4a with additional rhythmic punctuation from percussion, additional counterpoints



from the brass, and other changes to increase its intensity. Finally Ex. 2 returns and completes the first section of the cantata.

The baritone soloist now embarks on a piece of un-accompanied declamation (*quasi recit. ad. lib. robusto*).

Babylon was a great city,  
Her merchandise was of gold and silver,  
Of precious stones, of pearls, of fine linen,  
Of purple, silk, and scarlet,  
All manner vessels of ivory,  
All manner vessels of most precious wood,  
Of brass, iron, and marble,  
Cinnamon, odours, and ointments,  
Of frankincense, wine, and oil,  
Fine flour, wheat, and beasts,  
Sheep, horses, chariots, slaves,  
And the souls of men.

. . . . .

The chorus takes up the narrative, heralded by a furious arpeggio, tearing down through the score like a flash of forked lightning :

Ex 7

*Allegro molto*  
col 8<sup>ve</sup>



Wood-wind, Trumpet  
Xylophone, Piano, and Strings

## 30 *The Music of William Walton*

The mere mention of the feast lets loose this angry phrase and the story of the sacrilege of drinking out of the Temple vessels gives a savage movement of quavers to the bass of the accompaniment. Constant changes of time signature— $2/4$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $3/8$ —increase the agitation. At the King's command for music the choir divides into two choruses, but reunites after tremendous fanfares on the brass.

In Babylon  
Belshazzar the King  
Made a great feast,  
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords,  
And drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine,  
Commanded us to bring the gold and silver vessels :  
Yea ! the golden vessels, which his father, Ne-  
buchadnezzar,  
Had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem.

He commanded us to bring the golden vessels  
Of the temple of the house of God,  
That the King, his Princes, his wives,  
And his concubines might drink therein.

Then the King commanded us :  
Bring ye the cornet, flute, sackbut, psaltery,  
And all kinds of music : they drank wine again  
Yea ! drank from the sacred vessels.  
And then spake the King :

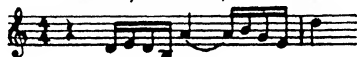
The baritone soloist begins the heathen hymn, but the chorus takes the words out of his mouth.

Praise ye the God of Gold,  
Praise ye the God of Silver,  
Praise ye the God of Iron,  
Praise ye the God of Wood,  
Praise ye the God of Stone,  
Praise ye the God of Brass.  
Praise ye the gods.

Into the orchestra a figure is now introduced which is repeated in different guises after each salutation to the gods of gold, silver, iron, wood and the rest of them .

## Ex 8

### Clarinet, Saxophone, and Strings



Another ‘praise’ figure that is extensively used is:

## Ex 9



Before this is heard, however, there has been a priestly march in procession before the god of gold :

**Ex 10**

**a tempo di marcia**



The swaying motif of these quotations, with or without its appendage of dotted notes, is used as a melisma at

### 32 *The Music of William Walton*

each 'praise'. For the god of silver, who is addressed by female voices only, it is given appropriately to flute and piccolo in this form :



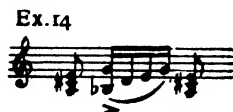
with a glockenspiel and a triangle picking out in silver tones its rhythmic outline. The iron god is hymned by male voices only, and for him the salutation has become a fanfare of trumpets :



which is immediately followed by a reply from the brass band situated away from the main body :



The god of wood is greeted with fiddles playing 'col legno' and with the xylophone :



For the god of stone a slapstick is introduced, which accompanies the following :



The god of brass is rightly praised by brass bands :



After their several announcements these phrases, especially Ex. 9 and Ex. 16, are incorporated in the final pæan of praise. Ex. 10, the march tune, also adds splendour to the general musical scene.

There is a long pause and the choral narrative is resumed. Before the words 'Thus in Babylon' Ex. 7 is heard again and the story of the feast retold. A good deal of the music is the same, notably the opening and the passage about the instruments of music. Between them is a new and derisive allusion to false gods, devils and idols. The texture now becomes clearer, and the heathen climax is upon us at 'O King, live for ever'.

Thus in Babylon, the mighty city,  
Belshazzar the King made a great feast,  
Made a feast to a thousand of his lords  
And drank wine before the thousand.

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Belshazzar whiles he tasted the wine  
Commanded us to bring the gold and silver vessels  
That his Princes, his wives and his concubines  
Might rejoice and drink therein.

After they praised their strange gods,  
The idols and the devils,  
False gods who can neither see nor hear,  
Called they for the timbrel and the pleasant harp  
To extol the glory of the King.  
Then they pledged the king before the people,  
Crying 'Thou, O King, art King of Kings :  
O King, live for ever. . . . '

But the words have not been uttered before the  
'thunderbolt' motif, Ex. 7, is heard in the orchestra.  
There is a pause. The baritone soloist tells the story of  
the writing on the wall to an accompaniment of cymbals,  
drums and gong :

And in that same hour, as they feasted,  
Came forth the fingers of a man's hand  
And the King saw  
The part of the hand that wrote.  
And this was the writing that was written :  
'Mene, mene, tekel upharsin'.

'Thou art weighed in the balance and found  
wanting.' (*Male chorus*)  
In that night was Belshazzar the King slain  
And his Kingdom divided.

The word 'slain' is snatched from the soloist's mouth by the chorus in a great shout.

The ironical hymn of praise to heathen deities is now balanced by a fanatical chorus of genuine thanksgiving to the God of Israel. The rejoicings of the Jews in the words of the first four verses of Psalm 81 are set to a vigorous '*allegro giocoso*', in which justice is done to the blowing up of the trumpet in the new moon. The opening words of the Psalm are repeated to different music in a staccato style. A semi-chorus undertakes the '*molto espressivo*' section dealing with the wailing of the kings and merchants. The semi-chorus is divided into two four-part choirs which sing of the silence of the trumpeters and pipers without accompaniment.

At the resumption of 'sing aloud' the orchestra breaks in with an animated toccata-like movement :



This rhythm and this kind of figuration are maintained till the tempo is changed to presto. At prestissimo the voice parts are marked 4/2 and become sweepingly diatonic, while the accompaniment has the strange time-signature 4/9/8, which means that each pulse of

## 36 *The Music of William Walton*

the  $4/2$  bar is accompanied by a whole bar of  $9/8$  time. The enormous impetus of the music may be imagined from the mere look of the opening measure :

Ex 18

**Prestissimo**  
VOICES

The musical score for Ex 18 is in 4/2 time and is marked **Prestissimo** for **VOICES**. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Then sing, sing a - loud." The piano accompaniment is marked with numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, indicating measures. The score is written on a grand staff with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a strong, driving rhythm with a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, and the vocal line is characterized by a series of eighth notes and a final phrase of eighth notes.

## *The Symphony*

THE classical symphony was an elaborate structure based on key. Architecturally speaking there was room in its design for a luxuriant variety of thematic material



disposed with a good deal of individual variety, but always ensuring coherence by a balance of contrasted tonalities. The composer was able to effect such a balance by means of harmony. The resources of harmony were constantly enriched by the increasing subtlety of the composer's imagination and by the ability of the listener's ear, lagging a little behind maybe, but none the less steadily advancing, to appreciate the logic of harmonic progression. During the nineteenth century this harmonic development went beyond its structural functions and began to be used decoratively : chromatic harmony in fact, for all its own dazzling possibilities, weakened the structure, just as encrustations of decorative plaster tend to weaken an architectural design. It ultimately undermined the stability of key and the extravagance of its development led to exhaustion. At the end of the century composers began to feel that tonality, after a useful and enormously fruitful career of three centuries, was finished, as an organic principle of design. They began to look elsewhere—to the old modes, to non-harmonic counterpoint, to the simultaneous use of several keys whereby a new kind of tonal balance was effected, and even to the rejection of any kind of centre of gravity in favour of purely arbitrary schemes of construction. This atonality seems very much like trying to abolish gravity and attempting to build from the roof downwards. At any rate there is a certain amount of evidence to show that the ear, as a psychological organ of apprehension, demands by its own nature some sort of tonal centre as a base from which it can make its explorations into the imaginative possibilities of sound. If harmonic development has weakened the unifying force of key, it has only thereby

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increased the need for some other rallying point for the ear.

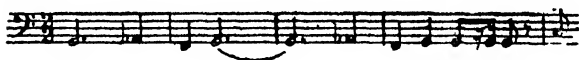
Walton wrote his symphony in 1932-5 when there was a good deal of restless experimenting after new principles of cohesion for instrumental music that aspired to long flights. He was prepared to use the most far-fetched harmony, which in vulgar parlance means strong and acute discord, and he had therefore to obtain some cohesive agent capable of bearing the disruptive strain to be put upon it. His choice fell on the simplest, the most primitive and the most direct—the pedal-point. He puts down a note, or maybe a chord, in the bass and does not allow you to lose sight of it for a moment—it is his sheet-anchor, his tonal centre, his tonic.

It is worth while, therefore, to look at the bass of the first movement and observe its behaviour independently of what is going on above it. For the sheer amount of tone that is produced from a thick and heavily scored texture of dissonant harmony and self-willed contrapuntal lines requires a more drastic assertiveness on the part of the bass, if single-handed it is to control the tonality, than when it progresses harmonically, contrapuntally or thematically as in classical symphonies. A bass note is put down and sustained for long stretches. When it moves it shifts stiffly on to a neighbouring note or gravitates by uneasy passage towards a new tonal centre. Even when, as at [14] the bass enunciates a theme (a version of Ex. 9 below) it is only a momentary occurrence lasting eight bars between fixture on C and fixture on F. Again, even in the middle section, which retains some of the harmonic mobility of the classical development section, the bass is ever resisting freedom of movement, and asserting by mere persistence the

broad tonality of the movement. At one point (between [25] and [30]) a pedal chord moves up the chromatic scale, but it manages to lever itself back on to F and thence to the B flat pedal-point that marks the beginning of a compressed recapitulation at [33].

This extended use of the pedal-point entails a very different treatment from that of a bagpipe's drone. It permits of reinforcement by a dominant pedal sounded either simultaneously, as in the opening of the symphony, or in alternation with it, when it has the usual projective force of dominant harmony. It may take the form of a chord, as in the instance already quoted of a moving minor sixth. It may also be strengthened by oscillations on either side of the main note, as for instance at the point just before [4] where the tuba throws in its weight in order to move the centre of gravity to C

**Ex. I**



which only differs from an organ-pedal G in being more emphatic.

This method of regulating the harmonic flow of the music by a stiff bass is like the determination of a river's course by the corners of its banks. Its main direction is clear, but it winds and divides itself into reaches. The reaches vary in length ; each is self-contained while it lasts, but at the next corner a new view is revealed. So this symphony flows clearly in B flat minor, with a double pedal of tonic and dominant to assert the fact at the opening and the close, for the pointed figures of Ex. 2

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Ex 2



constitute a double drone with an ictus. The use of the dominant, F, to give a rhythmic kick to the pedal point should be noticed, for F is to occupy the position of mediator between the main and the subsidiary tonalities. At the risk of tedium to the reader, but as a direction post to those who have at hand either the complex full-score or the simplified arrangement for piano duet, a further paragraph shall be devoted to the goings-on of the bass. The second subject of the Exposition is to cluster round C, and this new tonality is approached by twelve bars of its dominant G, as we have just seen in Ex. 1 above. C is now maintained continuously for twenty-three bars. When it is relinquished the theme, Ex. 7 below, contrives still to maintain the tonality by circling round the note C. The bass now begins to drop and dwells for a time (17 bars) on E. The next section of the movement which constitutes the central section of the second subject (beginning at [11] 'a tempo agitato') is securely pinned to C by alternations of pedals on G and C. The third section, after [15], is clearly in some sort of F, rising, as the middle section of the movement is approached, to F sharp and thence by stages to B, which dominates the first half of the development. F natural recaptures the latter part of this section, and so acts as a dominant preparation for the return of B flat at [33] for the recapitulation, which, with the coda, is anchored to the tonality of B flat with very little movement of the bass.

We have then, broadly speaking, a tonal scheme in which the balance is struck between B flat minor and a chromatic kind of C. We have also a formal scheme, tripartite, as in the classical symphony, but thematically more closely knit and more continuous in development. Analysis along orthodox lines, so far as it is possible, is advantageous in, so to speak, a geographical sense—it enables you to know where you are in the movement. It also provides a framework in which various kinds of balance can be struck—a balance of themes, of keys and of sheer length as between one section and another. This symphony chiefly differs from the classical symphony in the disposition of its first and second subjects—using ‘subject’ in the accepted sense of a mass of thematic material. Thus the first subject is short (63 bars) and compact ; but its main theme Ex. 3 below, dominates the movement by refusing to be confined to its place in the tonic key in the exposition. It draws attention to itself when the key changes, just where one would expect new material to take the stage ; it does the same thing again in the third section of what from its place in the scheme one would call the second subject group, and it echoes through to the end of the section in a new theme (Ex. 10) that is ultimately derived from itself (Ex. 3). By thus quelling each new theme as it appears Ex. 3 maintains its supremacy. If allowance is made for this very important modification, it is permissible to analyse the movement as in sonata form since its structure is tripartite, and its musical subject matter is an abstract argument of themes and a balance of tonalities. The key and thematic issues, however, are not fought out together, as in the classical symphony, but independently, though overlapping each other.

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The key scheme we have already examined. We now have to look at the thematic material. As soon as a drum roll has conjured a B flat out of silence and the horns have confirmed the key, the second violins reaffirm it in their fashion, which consists of a light but markedly rhythmic figure in two pieces—*a* and *b* of Ex. 2 above. At once a tune is announced by the oboe, a tune reminiscent of Sibelius, as indeed is all the first subject, a fact which suggests that the starting point for the symphony in the composer's mind was the work of Sibelius which was the dominating influence in England at the time it was written. Walton's views on Sibelius, however, soon outgrow the scope of an essay in musical criticism and develop a spacious argument entirely of their own, conducted in a language that is entirely the composer's own. The Sibelian tune which constitutes the first theme of the first subject is this:—



Ex 4



Meantime the violoncello has dropped a hint of the bass it means to develop

Ex 5



In an augmented form this becomes (at [I])

Ex 6



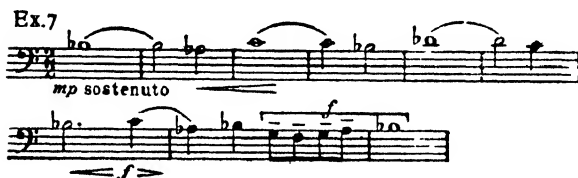
of which the importance is the interval of the seventh. For the seventh characterizes one of the second subject themes and it is the limiting outline of the chord of the diminished seventh, a chord universally reprobated by post-romantic composers, which is nevertheless to be found at the heart of this modern symphony—though not in the finale.

Key is usually regarded as the main determinant in an orthodox sonata form of the arrival of the second subject, though there is the case of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A, op. 101, where the new key is established before the new theme arrives, and it is possible to conduct an academic debate on how long the first subject lasts and where the second subject begins. In this symphony, as already indicated, a similar legalistic quibble arises if

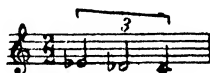
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attempts are made to analyse it on orthodox sonata lines, for when the secondary tonality of C has been reached and held by a pedal C, the first theme to be heard is the first subject (Ex. 3) loudly proclaimed by all the woodwind and subsequently reaffirmed by the strings.

There is no doubt, however, that we reach the end of a section at [7] and a new tune, the first of the second subject group, is announced by the violins and a couple of solo violoncellos playing in unison :

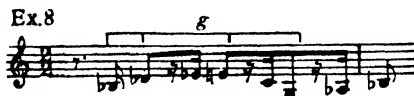


This tune in its counterstatement develops a triplet figure



which makes it readily identifiable in subsequent appearances and the gruppetto *f* enlarges itself to contain five instead of four quavers.

Under the tune Ex. 7 the second violins and violas have in alternation a new accompanimental figure





in which the prongs of the fork *g* spell out the chord of the diminished seventh. And in this disguise the chord permeates the music, until at [10] a new theme (containing prominent sevenths) appears :



This is the second constituent of the second subject. The third is an *agitato* passage which issues in a fantasia on the chord of the diminished seventh with the first subject—Ex. 3 *c*—hurled against it. (The tonality at this point is a firm C.) Next comes a version of Ex. 9 stated by all the basses including the tuba, but excluding the trombones. Finally a portmanteau tune derived from the first subject, an amalgam of Ex. 3 and Ex. 4, rounds off the Exposition (and the first side of the gramophone record)



The middle section begins with the first subject Ex. 3 in A flat, but the tone is damped down to a *pianissimo*. This next part of the movement is to provide the contrast of comparative quiet and reduced speed and impetus. After Ex. 3 comes Ex. 9 on the bassoon, which,

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when joined by the flute, presents Ex. 4 in the form of Ex. 11

Ex 11



and so provides a text for considerable discussion. The time is further slackened after [22] and an episode marked 'espressivo con dolore' follows in which the same motif, Ex. 11, is heard from the oboes, with violoncello, horn and bassoon in turn making sympathetic comments on it in contrapuntal solos. The background, however, is the mutter of strings played tremolando, a source of unrest that very soon restores animation and power. Ex. 9 is next recalled by the horn [25]. At [26] Ex. 3 *c* sounds its alarm once more, and the bass in minor sixths climbs chromatically from D and B flat to A and F with the tonality pivoting round A until it returns to F (with suitable supertonic alternations on C) for a return to B flat. The recapitulation is projected not only by all this thorough preparation in the bass, but with a catapult-like force derived from a climax of trills, tremolos, and short powerful figures. Thus the middle section is a steadily developing dynamic crescendo.

The recapitulation thus launched is condensed to half the length of the exposition. All the main themes are recalled—Ex. 3, Ex. 7 and Ex. 4, and then summarily and powerfully Ex. 9 in its horn version. There is a sudden interjection of crashing dissonance by the whole brigade of brass at [41]. This interruption precipitates the coda, which poises first on an A flat pedal before

moving to B flat to conclude the movement, as it began, with Ex. 2 and an emphatic chord of B flat major.

The interest of the second movement is not thematic or structural, but rhythmic and dynamic. And the rhythms and stresses are applied to produce an emotional effect uncommon in music—malice. This Scherzo is headed 'presto, con malizia'.

Now ill-will is not one of the sentiments which music finds it easy to portray. The only method it has at its disposal for doing it is the creation of organized disorder. It is hard to conceive of evil otherwise than as the negation of good, of which the mind has a direct intuition. The nature of goodness is broadly speaking apprehended as a harmony—in its literal sense of a fitting together. Evil is a disruption of that harmony. Music itself is a system of harmonious relationships, i.e., of sounds that fit as to euphony and rhythm. When it is called on to portray the opposite of the good it does so by disrupting its own harmonies (again using the word not in the limited technical sense, but as representing every kind of melodic, contrapuntal, rhythmic way of fitting sounds together). To deceive the expectant ear by a displaced accent is therefore the first fall from innocence. Jagged and broken time-lengths, irregular groupings, wilful misplacements become sinister, and their forceful iteration is damnation itself.

Walton inherited from Stravinsky the method of scattering bar-lines and drumming away at gritty chords on all the wrong beats. His early work is full of the prickly, restless energy that was set free by the disintegration of normal organic rhythms—*Portsmouth Pint* is the conspicuous instance of such a release of high-tension current and *Belshazzar's Feast* uses the same

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means of generating forceful expression in the interests of drama. In this Scherzo the drama is not specified, but one constantly feels that the curtain is up, and that the furious forces will become persons contending on a stage. It is not ballet music, but one expects it to become that at any moment.

The tonality is a Dorian E with the flattened seventh made prominent by inclusion wherever convenient in the tonic chord. As in the first movement, which also uses a prominent flattened seventh in its tonal scheme, this tonality is established and the general rhythmic run of the movement opened out by an animated drone of tonic and dominant, E and B. The first theme—for there must be themes in which to embody rhythms in any music above that of a rhapsody for drums—is a gruff sequence of thirds, distinguished by internal syncopations and harmonic false relations :

Ex 12



This is repeated by the violins with various adjuncts and flying commentary from other parts of the orchestra. Between this and the next obvious theme occurs a swift episode of angular rhythm—threes and fives in alternation. Soon comes the savage tune,

Ex. 13



six bars to be extended to eight on subsequent appearances. There is here a thematic relationship with Ex. 3 of the first movement both in the repeated notes and in the contour, and there is also an amusing recrudescence of the chord of the diminished seventh when the violins and cellos in all seriousness and solitude play 'sul tasto' (i.e., with the nasal tone of finger-board production).

Ex 14



There is no formal recapitulation, but both Ex. 12 and Ex. 13 are heard more than once in the headlong course of the movement and at one point [76] they occur together.

It is difficult to describe the devices by which the pieces of agitated rhythm are forced under pressure into a continuous torrent. It is easier to take a glance at the score and observe how their order rooted in disorder stands, if one may borrow and distort a Tennysonian phrase to account for the *malizia* already discussed. There is just before the final climax one further piece of wickedness. The whirling atoms of rhythm, which usually come together to make a crescendo of tension, get softer to make a quite appreciable and very mis-

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leading diminuendo. But the withdrawal is only *pour mieux sauter*, and the movement clatters to its close with every instrument going at it hammer and tongs.

In the slow movement attention reverts to themes and their behaviour, but it is a melodic rather than a structural interest that engages the listener—and the analyst. There are certain superficial similarities of method to the first movement. Tonalities are established in the same way by persistent bass notes used as centres of gravity. Development is even more continuous, and one theme seems to evolve out of another without the paraphernalia of sonata form, and in spite of the absence of familiar direction posts an equally organic unity is achieved. The movement grips the more for being less violent than its predecessors. It is very much more contrapuntal in texture, and seeing that the themes change their outline as they grow—the sign manual of Walton's style—they are mostly etched in the decisive lines of wood-wind solos. Indeed there is a moment in the middle (at [88]) where the violins make an entry that is arresting because they have had hardly any melodic work to do up to that point. It has the inevitable rightness of something not consciously missed before, but now obviously needed.

The moods of violence and malice are passed ; the slow movement is ruminative and tinged with melancholy—it is so marked. And so a feeling of romance is engendered which looks back to the viola concerto and forward to the violin concerto, though the harmony remains sufficiently astringent and the counterpoint sufficiently independent to avoid all suggestion of anachronism or incongruity with its present surroundings. The chosen tonality is C sharp, equidistant by a

minor third from the B flat of the first movement and the E of the second.

The flute announces the parent theme over a pedal point.

Ex 15

*Andante con malinconia*



This theme, if taken by itself, would gravitate to F# minor, but the main tonality, propounded by the pedal in the opening bars and confirmed by its reassertion in the last, is C# minor. This is another instance of a tendency towards bipolarity of keys which was noticed in the *Sinfonia Concertante*. Tonic and dominant no longer stand in their old fixed relation to each other, but rival one another in importance—after all, even in Beethoven there are instances of their simultaneous assertion. But Walton's practice seems rather to be due to a liking for modal ambiguity as a means of obtaining intensity of effect.

It will be observed that the melody, Ex. 15, has a curious tendency to resolve its dissonances not upon harmony notes but on the unison. Its pattern is that of Ex. 4, which has a far-reaching influence on the whole symphony. The quaver gruppetto is important in that it influences the contour of the other themes. The next two appear together over a lightly held pedal G sharp.

## Ex. 16

Clar

*dolce espressivo*

Oboes

These are very soon followed by a tune that is obviously a development of the oboe theme of Ex. 16

## Ex. 17

Clar

which is repeated several times by various instruments and finally answered by the string entry already referred to. These solos proceed quite quietly and the tranquillity is not disturbed by the entry of the drum playing a pedal C in triplets. Pianissimo: but it pervades the flow of the music, and triplet figuration is maintained after the bass is changed and a quasi-recapitulation begun with the reappearance of Ex. 15 on wood-wind, horns and strings



in octaves. Before this happens, however, the sinuous figure *g* of Ex. 17 threads in and out of the texture calling attention to the flat-sharp oxymoron of the last two F's in figure *g*—a very characteristic Waltonism.

The reprise, when it comes, is interesting for the fact that the tonic key is not established either with or by the first subject (i.e., Ex. 15), but is reaffirmed when the turn of the second subject comes. The first subject is recapitulated in F. The tonic key of C sharp for the second subject (the double tune of Ex. 16) is established in the usual way by a pedal. This pedal lasts till the end of the movement with only a moment's intermission for a rhetorical, and indeed passionate, appeal in reiterated chords just before the music broadens out to a quieter mood of final resignation. At the very last the flute recalls with a sigh the essence of Ex. 15.

### *Finale.*

The last movement of the symphony was composed some time after the other three, which had even had their first public performance before the composer had decided how to bring to a logical and emotionally satisfying conclusion the many vigorous issues and the conflicting moods which he had let loose in Allegro, Scherzo and slow movement. Recourse to the technical procedure of fugue was probably the easiest way of resolving the deadlock. For, in any form of composition, literary, musical or pictorial, the 'how' and the 'what' of expression cannot be separated in the artist's mind, so that he can seek the solution of his problem of their complete integration by either route. If the more common way is to cast about for the best way of saying something which he has in his mind to say, it is still

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equally possible to concentrate on the choice of a medium or a method, with a resultant clarification of the content of his thought when he has found it. So here. The technical decision brought with it the right expressive content.

Certain changes were dictated by the adoption of fugal procedure: the pedal point is necessarily more restricted in function and the treatment of the main themes becomes more stable and less polymorphic. Incidentally there is less pre-occupation with the interval of a seventh in this movement.

It may be noted in passing that Dr. Vaughan Williams made the same decision to write a fugal finale in his F minor symphony which was roughly contemporary with Walton's. There, too, the ordered (which is not to say 'unemotional') summary of a fugue was found to be the best way of resolving violent emotions.

The organic connection of the finale with the rest of the symphony, however, apart from the superficial testimony of the ear is attested thematically by the prominence and persistence of the following motif



Ex. 18 is not a quotation but a formulation of the main subject of the movement, and the initial octave swoop from the little C to the big C stands for various forms of anacrusis. Its relationship to Ex. 3 *d* and still more to Ex. 4, of which it is a kind of inversion, in the first movement, and its rhythmic resemblance to Ex. 17 of the

slow movement link the last movement securely to its predecessors. So does its tonality—B flat once again, but more major than minor.

Structurally, the movement falls into four clearly defined sections : a forceful exposition in two parts, two fugal, or at any rate highly contrapuntal, middle sections, and a recapitulation of the introductory *maestoso* of the exposition for epilogue—the rest of the first section, ‘*brioso ed ardentemente*’, is not recalled.

We begin, then, *maestoso* and in B flat, with our faithful servant the pedal-point to put us securely on our tonal feet before we are caught by the vigorous blast of the quick *brioso* section, which is to become *feroce* before we are through it. Over the B flat sounds with no uncertain voice Ex. 18 written out in longer notes and with a double anacrusis, namely a swirling scale from the strings and a striding arpeggio from the wind. It is repeated time and again with a diminution of itself by way of emphasis and punctuation.

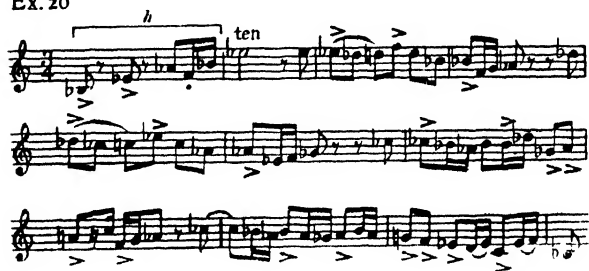


From this massive enunciation of a pregnant text the composer breaks into a fiery harangue, consisting of short motifs welded together by the sheer speed and violence with which they follow one upon another. But however fast and far they go, Ex. 19 in some form or another snaps in on them. Otherwise, apart from this recurring figure, there is not much resemblance in

the thematic scraps when microscopically viewed. Project them, however, in sequence, as they are here propelled through the orchestra (often in antiphony between wind and strings), and they form a coherent thematic line with, of course, a supercharged vitality. It is thematic material shot out of a volcano to form a stream of lava.

The stream suddenly breaks at [112] and starts again in a trickle marked, as is appropriate to volcanic activity, *focosamente*, i.e., *fierily*. This livid trickle is the subject of a fugue.

Ex. 20



It is enunciated by second violins and violas with such extra tingle as quick up- and down-bows and semi-quaver rests can impart to this bold outline. Its pungency is also increased by reinforcement at various points with doublings from the wood-wind. The Subject at subsequent reappearances sometimes wears a new nose and a different tail, but from the last beat of the first bar to the end of the eighth bar it is constant and 'real'.

So, the Subject having started firmly in E flat, the Answer duly follows in the eleventh bar in B flat. The

counter-subject appears in slightly varied forms, but its essence consists of forward semi-quaver movement followed by an octave drop.

**Ex. 21**

The third voice enters with the Subject in the bass. Upon the conclusion of this statement the first bar of the Subject, figure *h*, is taken and worked in imitation, with the brass, hitherto silent, putting in their oar. A middle entry in D follows in the soprano voice with the bass pursuing it in imitation at a bar's distance, until the whole thing breaks off with a loud snap as the lines of contrary motion converge. A calm episode now supervenes. The oboe plays this theme

**Ex. 22**

which is as close-fisted as the fugue subject was open-handed. But observe that the new theme follows the general melodic outline of the old, though its contours are much flatter, and the little cadence figure *j* recalls similar turns of phrase in the previous movements. Fragments of the fugue subject, Ex. 20, are heard in counterpoint with Ex. 22, which is soon repeated a minor third higher. The strings appear to become

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uneasy at the continuation of this seeming depression and begin to murmur *sul ponticello*. Their agitation brings horn and trumpet to the rescue. They loudly proclaim the first bars of the Subject (Ex. 20 *h*) in the tonic key and in augmentation. It is enough: the Subject in full sweeps in with all the majesty of trumpet and trombone in octaves, and after much jubilant reiteration of *h* we are ready for the next stage in the movement's progress.

The time changes to 3/8 and the tempo to *viva-cissimo*. When the change of mood has been sufficiently established a new fugal movement is started with this version of Ex. 22 as its subject.

Ex.23



This time fugal procedure is very informal. The Subject is accompanied right from the start with a counterpoint. Its Answer appears a diminished fifth higher and no further complete statement is made of it. Instead we hear recapitulatory hints of Ex. 20 *h* and something even more fundamental.

Ex 24



Wood-wind

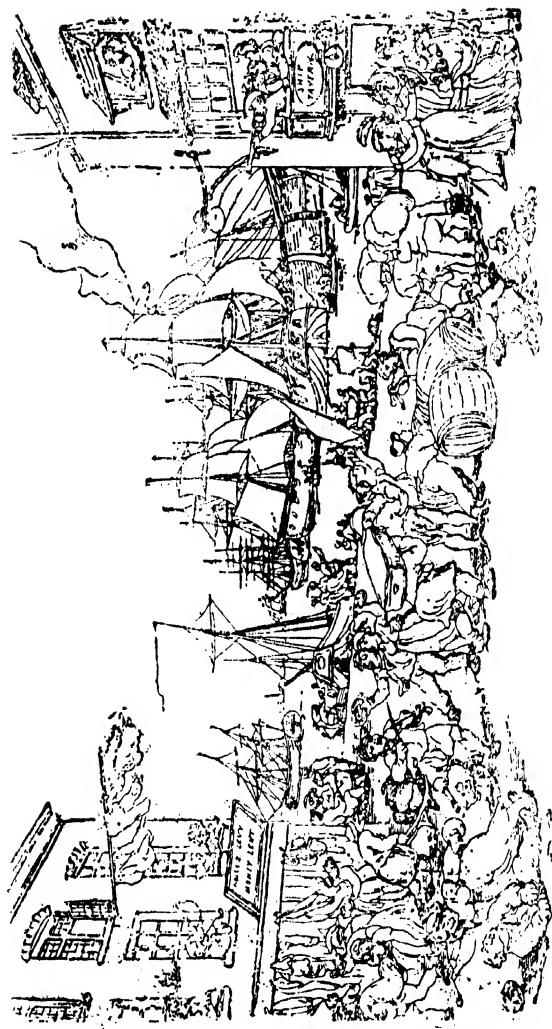
which on inspection turns out to be an allusion, several times repeated, to Ex. 18 from the introduction of the movement. Soon indeed we have a complete restatement of the first fugue subject, Ex. 20 (though written out in the notation of the second, i.e., in  $3/8$  time). Entries of *h* in stretto lead to a considerable climax, which, however, is not broken off but is dispelled in a diminution of time and speed to the final section.

The maestoso part of the exposition returns in full power, and Ex. 18 sums up both finale and the symphony as a whole in its concise and cogent diatonic declaration of faith.

Thus the composer, after taking the unprecedented step of allowing an 'unfinished' symphony to come to performance (as it was by the London Symphony Orchestra on 3rd December 1934, when Sir Hamilton Harty conducted the first three movements) succeeds in resolving the problem that had given him pause.

The first complete performance was given at a B.B.C. Concert at Queen's Hall on 6th November 1935, under Sir Hamilton Harty. The recorded version is also conducted by Harty. Latterly, the composer has frequently directed performances of it himself.

It is worth noting that the instrumentation employed for the symphony is that of the orthodox full orchestra and makes no demands for additions to the wind (such as the saxophone), luxuries (like the brass bands in *Belshazzar's Feast*), nor special percussion until the last movement. Two each of the wood-wind, four horns, three trumpets which incidentally are 'in C', three trombones, and tuba constitute with drums and strings a modest "full orchestra" for a modern work. The extra percussion required in the finale is an additional



PORTSMOUTH POINT    *by Thomas Rowlandson*



set of timpani (two players), cymbals, side drum, and gong. The drama of *Belshazzar's Feast* with its large choir of voices had demanded a much enlarged orchestra capable of producing special effects (which are usually dispensed with in performance); the purely musical issues of the symphony can be adequately presented on a more modest orchestra, hardly larger till the finale than that used by Brahms.

*Four Short Pieces*

FOUR short miscellaneous pieces for orchestra, scattered among Walton's not too prodigal output of major works, require notice but not extended commentary or detailed analysis.

The overture *Portsmouth Point* comes next to *Facade* in the list of his published works, since the intermediate compositions have been discarded. Its date is 1925. It has been recorded for gramophone, both for Decca and for H.M.V., the former by an orchestra conducted by Anthony Bernard, the latter by the B.B.C. Orchestra under Adrian Boult. *Siesta* is a miniature for chamber orchestra which appeared in 1926. Arrangements for piano duet of both these works have been made by the composer himself. *Crown Imperial* was commissioned by the B.B.C.; it was first performed by its orchestra under Boult on 9th May 1937. It was written to celebrate the Coronation and is available in numerous arrangements for different instruments and combinations of instruments. *Scapino* bears the date 28th December 1940, at the end of the score. It was written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founda-

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tion of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and is dedicated to that body and its conductor, Dr. F. A. Stock. It was first performed in England by the B.B.C. on 12th November 1941. It will be noted that Walton's two most recent (speaking as from 1942) compositions, the Violin Concerto and *Scapino*, have been commissioned from America. *Siesta*, *Crown Imperial* and *Scapino* are available for the gramophone.

### 'PORTSMOUTH POINT'

LIKE *Scapino*, *Portsmouth Point* is correctly described as a comedy overture and its inspiration was pictorial. *Portsmouth Point* was prompted by a print of Thomas Rowlandson, the English caricaturist who was a contemporary of Beethoven (1756-1827). The picture (reproduced here and in the piano duet score) shows an animated scene on the water front at Portsmouth. There is roystering, fighting, kissing, street music, goods traffic, all preparatory to embarkation on the ships in the harbour, some of which have their sails already set.

Like the picture, the score is crowded with bustling figures. Bits break off like individuals and small groups from a seething crowd. Rhythmic irregularities induced by a perpetual change of time-signature impart tremendous animation to the music, and the element of vigorous caricature is reproduced by the deliberate exploitation of incongruities. Thus, a square opening theme in the robust style of Handel is dislocated in the first bar by a syncopation and subsequently by wilful cross-accent, phrases are repeated in sequence, a rare device in Walton's technique, but the sequence, whose normal

function is to suggest a regular pattern, has its regularity clipped or is spread across different beats ; the jostling of bars of  $5/8$  and  $2/8$  time implies that in a less erratic world they might all have been in a cheerfully commonplace  $6/8$  ; the melodic figures have a way of tumbling over with a bump. The scoring is both shrill and heavy. Indeed the piquancy of the viands is somewhat obscured by the extreme savouriness of the sauce.

The events in this eventful piece cannot be catalogued otherwise than as they appear in the score, one hard on on the heels of the next. We may observe, however, the following detachable but not detached episodes. After the square introduction comes a tune

Ex 1



Interjections of the opening anacrusis of a hornpipe let loose a sequential development of constituents of Ex. 1, with the square but syncopated introduction alternating with them. The second section of the overture goes from C to E $\flat$ , and there are several attempts to form another subject, of which these two are prominent



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Note the deliberate disturbance of symmetry between the first two phrases of Ex. 2, and observe that Ex. 3 develops into a solo for a boatswain's pipe. The two motifs are then amalgamated or transformed into something bearing the distinguishing mark of the four reiterated notes of Ex. 3. Two versions of it, one with semiquavers and the other with angular intervals, are then started off in a sort of canon, but the canon does not persist. Instead, we come to a section in B major founded ultimately but *longo intervallo* on Ex. 2 and its final bunch of semiquavers. A page or two of sequences and the recurrence of Ex. 3 in the bass leads to a recapitulation of Ex. 1 and its entourage. A flourish of the hornpipe finishes it sharply.

There is still a good deal of the *enfant terrible* about the work in its delight in prickly rhythms, the mockery of academic devices, and the revelling in enormous tonal masses from an orchestra with a specification of three each of the wind, trumpet included, and a copious battery. But it has the high spirits of youth and it asserts in no uncertain fashion the arrival of a new personality in English music. It is dedicated to Siegfried Sassoon.

### ' SIESTA '

SIESTA, which was first performed by Guy Warrack at one of his concerts with chamber orchestra at Aeolian

Hall in the autumn of 1926, retains some of the piquancy of *Facade* and *Portsmouth Point* but, as its title indicates, it is concerned with a quieter mood and is laid out for an orchestra without brass, except a couple of horns, and one each of the woodwind, except for an alternative piccolo to flute and a second clarinet.

There is room in this unhurried little piece for melody, and the word 'solo' appears from time to time in the score, as different instruments are told off one by one to deal with it. The first tune is an oboe solo.

Ex 4



This is presented against a gently undulating figure that somehow makes clear the distinction between a siesta and a lullaby. The next idea is a soft but quite awake dotted theme, or rather not a theme so much as one of those extended melodic sentences that are cast not in metre but in prose. It is muttered by the lower strings. Soon, however, the woodwind start whistling an invitation to the wakeful sleeper to abandon all idea of a nap and join his (or more probably her) playfellows in the street. For with a change of key to E major the horns play this Italian street song

Ex. 5



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With the horns the violoncellos redouble the tune at their various octaves, and this spacing of melodies in various octaves simultaneously is constantly being employed throughout the piece. Over Ex. 5 dotted-note figures are maintained in motion. Ex. 4 reappears and brings back with it the key of A minor, which soon makes way for A major, in which key Ex. 5 is recapitulated with a light and fanciful accompaniment of chords on the second beat, while solo instruments add as asides fragments of the dotted-semiquaver idea. The siesta ends on a tonic chord which contains an added second and an added fourth. Delius had regularly used the chord of the added sixth as though it was a tonic triad. Walton here uses a far more dissonant combination of notes as though it was a perfect consonance, but, as a safeguard against misunderstanding by less compliant ears, violas and oboes sustain an A after the dissonant pizzicato chord has ceased to sound.

### ‘CROWN IMPERIAL’

THE Coronation of 1937 produced from Walton a march that takes its place naturally by the side of Elgar's set of ‘Pomp and Circumstances’ marches, to which it no doubt owes something in the methods of uncomplicated rhythm and broad melody by which it secures popular allegiance. To the title *Crown Imperial: A Coronation March*, is subscribed a quotation from William Dunbar's poem ‘In Honour of the City of London’, which Walton had at that time been recently engaged in setting to music.

‘In beawtie beryng the crone imperiall.’

Hence the name, apt to the occasion of its origin. It is scored for a large modern orchestra with three each of the woodwind and organ at the end. Its form is one commonly employed for marches, based on the Minuet and Trio ; its key is C major. It is marked 'allegro reale' : *reale* = royally, thus Walton goes one better with a king than Elgar did with the nobility (*nobilmente*) !

The first subject begins thus over a rhythmically articulated pedal point on the tonic C :

## Ex 6

*Allegro reale*

The trio contains a broad cantabile melody in A flat beginning

## Ex.7



All the matter is recapitulated, including the trio

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now transposed into C major, and the march broadens to a conclusion of great magnificence.

### ‘ SCAPINO ’

THE score of this comedy overture is prefaced by the portrait of its vagabond hero and its title page declares it to be ‘ after an etching from Jacques Callot’s *Balli di Sfessania* ’, 1622. Scapino appears from the portrait to be a proletarian Mephistopheles, but he has more style than his Germanic cousin, Till Eulenspiegel. Callot (1592–1635) was a French engraver born in Lorraine, who, after a training in Italy, achieved international fame and executed commissions for distinguished persons besides publishing sets of his own plates, as in the book which contains the picture under discussion. Scapino himself was the rascally servant of the *Commedia dell’Arte*, the confidential slave of the old Latin farces, who planned his master’s escapades, especially amorous escapades. The erotic side of his character gets a section to itself in the middle of the overture.

The score is laid out for large orchestra containing a full chorus of wood-wind, three to each family, a couple of cornets to provide antiphony to the trumpets, harp, and a battery containing besides the usual drums, cymbals and triangle, a xylophone with a prominent part, glockenspiel, side-drum, tambourine, Chinese blocks, slapsticks and castanets. It begins *molto vivace* and *fortissimo* with a rushing figure from strings and wind and a clatter of percussion in Walton’s old brittle style. A bold theme from the trumpet with a syncopated kink in it proclaims the hero at once. The smoother side of his tongue is indicated immediately after in an observa-



tion from the violoncello, a pert nonchalant little tune. Here then is Scapino as he first presents himself :

Ex 8



Ex 9



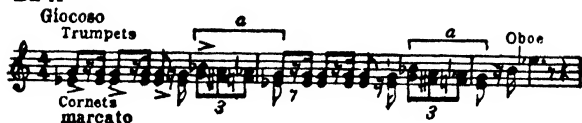
Other melodic fragments and figures fly about and fill the air. There is, however, an important second subject in a new key :

Ex 10



These Scapino themes recur again and again among whirling scraps of melodic material, which coalesce into a continuous stream with firm outlines, just as moving pictures do in a cinematograph. The accents become irregular as the time signature shows the same sort of instability as in *Portsmouth Point*. Presently a new pattern is laid down with the direction 'poco a poco piu animato'. It sounds familiar. Trumpets share the first statement with cornets :

## Ex 11



What is it? An echo of *Scheherazade* through a distorting medium—

## Ex. 12



There is no significance in the fortuitous resemblance, but as the phrase is repeated one's attention is diverted from what is going on by a puzzled search for its congener, and such distraction is bad for the apprehension of music so fleet as this. The similarity certainly never entered the head of the composer who considers it more like a phrase from the overture to *Tancredi* and certainly treats it more in the manner of Rossini than of Rimsky-Korsakoff. Its purpose is to provide a connecting counterpoint for the allusions to Ex. 8 and Ex. 10 which fly hither and thither. When the time comes for recapitulation it flowers into a major theme and dominates the last part of the work.

We now come to the half-way mark, which is an unaccompanied duet for side-drum and tambourine. The time changes to a more languorous  $3/4$  *come una serenata*, the key to a sentimental  $A\flat$ , the violins divide so as to imitate a guitar—they are directed to play pizzicato with the four finger-nails—and a solo violoncello starts a tune of 'exaggerated sentiment', which roams in a gallant and leisurely fashion through

three clefs and a correspondingly wide range of the instrument's compass

Ex. 13



which is Ex. 10 in augmentation.

Presently a viola and a violin join in the serenade, but the wood-wind poke out their tongues in mockery with fig. *a* of Ex. 11. The scoring becomes, if possible, more subtle and elaborate as counterpoints from Ex. 8 and Ex. 10 are added, and the key goes flatter still to D $\flat$ . But a quick change of mood supervenes, or rather the imitation love music is dropped and 'scherzevole' is the mark attached to a section in compound time, which is a free recapitulation of the first section. Compound time, however, is maintained till the end, so that the themes appear in rhythmic variants of their original form and we get occasional bars in 15/8 time. The details of the scoring—and Walton is always exceedingly particular about nuances, whether of accent or phrasing or tone-colour, and in this work the subtleties of percussion as well—are full of good touches, which are apt, however, to be lost in the congestion of the score and the forward impetus of the music. Emotionally and technically *Scapino* is a virtuoso work composed for a virtuoso orchestra, and it harks back to the mood and manner of *Portsmouth Point*. There are the same scintillating brilliance and brittle rhythms, a similar irony and tart-flavouring of what is essentially good-humoured toler-

ation, but more poise and less assertion, less wit perhaps and more humour than in the older, which is to say the younger, overture.

### *Concluding Note*

THIS latest (1941) work, *Scapino*, composed in time of war, turns its face decidedly away from the oppressive present to the abiding past. Walton had portrayed the violence of a generation hag-ridden by totalitarian force in *Belshazzar's Feast* and, like Dr. Vaughan Williams, in a symphony. He writes no tracts for the times. His immediately preceding work to *Scapino* was a set of piano duets for children, which have since been orchestrated and rechristened *Music for Children*.

Before this he had been writing music for films, of which a setting of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, in a clever and pleasing neo-Dowland style made for a film of *As You Like It*, and a ballet from *Escape Me Never* have been retrieved for general use. There are a few small choral pieces dating from as early as 1917 to an anthem composed for a friend's wedding in 1938, but his energies have been concentrated to a greater extent than most British composers upon the big works discussed in the pages of these two small books.

A birds-eye view of them shows certain characteristics of his musical thought, though not any immediately obvious mannerisms of personal vocabulary or idiom, such, for instance, as makes any note of Vaughan Williams or phrase of Dvorak immediately recognizable. The most conspicuous feature of his style is what must be called, in a horrific mouthful of description, his thematic

polymorphism ; plain repetition is so antipathetic to him that he cannot bring himself to give a definitive form to his themes for their various appearances ; they must have new heads or new tails or must vary their intervals, but they retain their identity nevertheless. This feature can be seen in an extreme form in *Belshazzar's Feast*, where, however, it is consciously used for a dramatic purpose, but it occurs as early as in the piano quartet and is found in all the orchestral works. His harmony gets its sharp flavour from a deliberate confusion of modality : shall it be sharp or flat, natural or inflected ? His answer is generally ' Either or both '. The false relations of the consecutive sixths in the Viola Concerto are the most conspicuous example of a hesitation that has in it no element of indecision. The Sinfonia Concertante shows examples of a similar oscillation, such as Schubert used to indulge in between major and minor thirds, but without limiting the inflected notes to the third degree of the scale. And there are even cases where the music seems to be poised between two keys. The general contrapuntal texture is conducive to this practice of different inflection in different voices, which is a modern resumption and extension of a common Elizabethan procedure.

In symphonic writing it is Walton's method to condense his recapitulations, and he has a way of recalling his themes for simultaneous presentation in mutual counterpoint. Indeed his whole symphonic style is contrapuntal rather than harmonic in its mode of progression. A conspicuous instance of simultaneous statement of themes, not merely in recapitulation but in exposition, is at the opening of the Violin Concerto where the bassoon states a countersubject to the soloist's main

theme in order to provide material for subsequent development. Augmentation is another contrapuntal device that is frequently employed. Some works make extensive use of some particular technical feature. Thus in the early piano quartet he favours a modal kind of tonality, in the symphony the elaborate development of the pedal-point. Rhythmic caprice is to the fore in *Facade* and the two comedy overtures. Every score bears meticulous marks of expression, accent and phrasing.

The range of mood is not perhaps very wide. Behind the wit on the one hand and the forcefulness on the other is a vein of somewhat wistful romanticism. In one hand he carries a rapier, in the other a bludgeon, but behind this formidable armament beats a heart not devoid of gentleness, and in control is a very clear head. It is from the romantic vein that Walton draws his sustained melodies and his lyrical utterance. The acerbity and the piquancy, which at first blush one is inclined to attribute to his instrumentation, is really the product of his harmony and his stringent use of dissonant, thematic counterpoint. For his use of the orchestral palette as such, the ballet, *The Wise Virgins*, which consists of rescoring of pieces by Bach, shows his taste in orchestral sonority more clearly than the original works, where it is involved in the stuff and substance of the music. The transcription is more luminous than his own scores are. Of his originality it is enough to observe how very difficult it is to trace any affiliations in his music. There are occasional traces of other men's music—an echo of Elgar, a flavour of Sibelius, a rhythmic hint from Stravinsky, a near-quotation from Rimsky-Korsakoff (or Rossini), but these incidentals signify

nothing more than the unconscious self-quotation in the Violin Concerto. Walton was uninfluenced by home-bred folk-song, he flirted with no foreign schools, he had next to no formal training, and from his early cathedral experiences he seems to have brought away no more than an aptitude for choral writing. His big works seem in an unusual degree to be self-conditioned creations of an individual mind, a mind moreover that emerged almost fully formed, or at any rate found its maturity with extraordinary speed and certainty. It follows from this that there is less continuity of development to be traced in his thought than is commonly the case with composers, though it is true that from the Viola Concerto onwards a greater intensity of feeling is discernible. While this may be a personal change, it also corresponds to a similar change in the general mental climate of the times. It is certain that his music reflects pretty accurately in its own terms the trends of thought and of feeling among his contemporaries of the intelligentsia.

*Postscript to 194- Impression.*

Mention of film music on page 72 warrants the addition to these notes of other contributions from this source to the concert repertory. The Spitfire Prelude and Fugue came from the film biography of R. J. Mitchell, the Spitfire designer, *The First of the Few*. The piece combines very ingeniously the requirements of illustrative with self-subsistent music. From "Henry V" a concert suite has been extracted from which two pieces for string orchestra are published—a Passacaglia (note again the use of a strict form for descriptive purposes) on the death of Falstaff, and "Touch Her Soft Lips and Part", illustrating the scene of farewell to Mistress Quickly. These three pieces are recorded.











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